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LABOUR

STANDS ON GOLDEN FEET.

*A Holiday Story, for Sensible Apprentices,
Journeymen, and Masters.*

BY

HEINRICH ZSCHOKKE.

TRANSLATED BY JOHN YEATS, LL.D.

Third Edition, Revised.

LONDON:

CASELL, PETTER, AND GALPIN;

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L. E. Y

PREFACE.



THE following little work exhibits, with characteristic energy and fidelity, the development of those principles which Zschokke believed to be the basis of all true civilisation. The influence of home training is powerfully portrayed; in the history of a family through three generations, individual and social progress are happily illustrated; the purpose and scope of national instruction are clearly shown; manual labour is seen at issue with machinery; throughout the work, maxims of prudence and precepts of piety are interspersed, such as an old man of seventy-five, a patriot, poet, philosopher, and historian, was willing and anxious to bequeath to posterity.

“I have written a tale,” said the Author to me, “in as attractive a style as possible; and in it are embodied, I believe, some of my best thoughts. My fellow-countrymen and countrywomen will read it, I am sure; but I would like it to be made known wherever the industrial classes constitute the real strength of a nation. If ever you have the leisure, and see an opportunity, translate it, to help on the cause at which I have laboured, now well-nigh half a century, uninterruptedly.”

J. Y.

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NOTE.

The word "Hand-work," is generally synonymous with manual labour, and capable of as various application. The term implies, specially, that kind of occupation by which the products of nature are wrought by rule, either for sale or for some other purpose, into articles that serve to satisfy our wants, gratify our wishes, or contribute to our comfort.

Hand-workers are either manual labourers, in the simplest and widest sense of the word, or members of a confederation, formed for the double purpose of supporting themselves and elevating the character of their employment. They are divided into three principal classes—masters, journeymen, and apprentices. Each of these again falls into sub-divisions.

A "Girdler's" business is a peculiar one in Germany, being partly that of a brazier and a button-maker; the girdler gilds and engraves too; generally he is a worker in all but the precious metals.

J. Y.

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Labour Stands on Golden Feet.

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CHAPTER I.

THE TRAVELLING TINKER.

WHO does not know, at Altenheim, the capital of the principality, the worthy burgher, Jonas Jordan, who lives in the castle-yard in the little old corner house, close to that palace-like building, the Industrial School? I will tell you his story.

Jonas was the son of poor people. His father, named Thaddeus, a tinker or brazier by trade, had a deal of trouble to earn a living. Industry and honesty did not fail him, it is true, but work and wages often did. He understood his business tolerably well, but other people understood it better. This was a bad job for him; but a worse was, he had married a tawdry maiden, who liked to dress smartly, and thus spend freely; who was fonder of good living than disposed to be frugal; and who would rather be gossiping than going about her kitchen or cellar. Thus house and shop went both to ruin. When she died, she left her husband debts, and the little Jonas, behind.

Thaddeus had those to pay, and was obliged to part with his slender stock of solder and metal for next to

nothing. Then he worked as journeyman for a few years, under other masters, yet could hardly earn for himself and son salt to their porridge. He was considering what to try next, when a good thought struck him. He went to his neighbour Fenchel, the girdler. Fenchel was a good sort of man, and very well off, only he liked his glass too much by day, and the public-house in an evening. Hence it happened to him, as to many another of the same class, that his head often grew heavy and his purse light, while cares increased daily. Thaddeus could foresee very well that Fenchel's concerns were going the wrong way; so he said to him: "Neighbour, you have plenty of capital wares I see, but too few orders and customers. Now-a-days hand-workers cannot get on. The manufactories in foreign parts are the ruin of our business. Jews and pedlars are running all over the world. I believe we must fight them with their own weapons. I will buy a hawker's license, go up and down the country with the last of my pots and pans, my lamps and spoons, and, if you are agreeable and will allow me a decent profit, with your girdler's wares too, your buckles and straps. It will do both you and me good; and there can be no fear of selling when folks have things brought to their houses, and thus long journeys saved them."

The notion pleased Master Fenchel, and they soon struck a bargain. Very few days after, Thaddeus went through the town gate, wheeling a well-filled barrow before him, from village to village; and beside him, bare-footed and cheery, ran the little Jonas. His wares soon found customers, for he knew how to recommend them, if they could not recommend themselves. Housewives gave him kettles and kitchen utensils of all kinds to solder and mend, for nobody knew better than he how to turn old things into new.

His wheelbarrow was often emptied and filled again, for he attended fairs too : by-and-by it was turned into a cart with a little grey ass before it. Then he was no longer the jolly tinker, but the merry hawker. He was welcomed everywhere and almost by everybody.

But in spite of good trade and profits, the hawker lived as hardly as the poorest tinker. In summer he took his frugal meals in the open air. Bread and water often sufficed for subsistence, and a barn or a stable was his sleeping place. Nobody knew what he did with his money. Yet father and son throve wonderfully in this wandering mode of life. Little Jonas, hardened to all sorts of weather, blossomed like a rose : poorly clad, he was almost like a beggar boy, yet kept scrupulously clean. And the old man sternly forbade him to ask or even accept alms. Nearly every day he had to hear and repeat the proverb—

Begged bread doth to mischief lead ;
Bread stolen brings the gallows ;
But labour helps in time of need ;
For labour, Heaven hallows.

“But I am still so little, father,” said the boy one day, in reply to this old adage. “What must my work be? And after all thy pains, thou art still poor; God makes only the great folks rich, who do nothing! Is that quite fair?”

Thaddeus was astonished at the dawning wisdom of his son, and was almost embarrassed for an answer. Yet he said : “Quite fair, perfectly fair ! Thou art a silly boy. The good God has made rich and poor, that one may serve the other, with money or with labour. If all men were rich, why, then all would be equally poor ; and every one would have to make his own shoes and mend his own clothes. Dost thou comprehend that?”

Jonas replied, laughing, "That would be funny, father! Still I think the dear God should not give some people everything, and others nothing!"

"Thou dost not see through it," said the father again. "Properly speaking, God gives people nothing; he only lends to them, and trusts them for a lifetime. When they die, they must give up all again. The king lies in his grave as naked and as lorn as the poor beggar. But their souls must then give an account, and be asked by God how they have applied the much or the little that was entrusted to them on earth, to the well-being of their fellows. Woe to him who has turned his strength, his understanding, or his substance, to his own advantage only, and done little or nothing for the happiness of others! In a future life, he who was richest here may then be poorest; and the most miserable amongst men be the most glorious before God. Dost thou comprehend?"

The boy nodded, yet resumed: "What does God wish me to do? I am yet too little, and can neither earn anything, nor turn it to account."

Father Thaddeus laughed, but was not at a loss for an answer. "Dost thou see that red-breast, with the straw in his bill? He is much less than thou, yet he works and builds his young ones a nest. Dost thou see the sparrows on the road, how they seek and pick about? Dost thou hear the woodpecker in the copse, how he hammers at the bark with his beak? Go; work for a living, and search for it as these do!"

Jonas scratched himself behind the ear, and answered, almost crying: "I will, father; but how, and where?"

"Listen, my lad. This is the spring. Look for sloes and elderberries, rose-leaves and others for ointment; marjoram, spurge, and thyme, wherever thou mayst and canst. These we will sell to the apothecary."

caries. In summer, gather basket-fuls of strawberries, bilberries, and raspberries ; carry them to the houses : they will yield money. In winter, let us gather and dry locks of wool, for the saddlers and tapestry makers, and withes for the basket and mat manufacturers. From the table of the bountiful God a thousand crumbs are falling for us : these we will pick up. They will give thee cheese to thy bread, and a piece of meat to thy potatoes. Only get to work ! I will give thee a little barrow, and a belt for thy shoulders."

The old man's words were not thrown to the winds. Jonas was a brisk, intelligent lad. The application followed the sermon immediately. The little fellow was on his feet, untiring, from morning to night, and things went by no means amiss with him ; for as he passed by the good folks in town and country, with his wheelbarrow laden before him, they exchanged smiles with him, and often bought of him more for his own sake than for the wares. Occasionally a couple of kreutzers were given him over and above bargain, or cast-off clothes, because beyond being civil he could coax a little, and because his childish questions or old-fashioned answers were amusing.

One thing, however, was unavoidable : he was often obliged to wander about for days, separated from his father, and to manage in the best manner he could. But even that did him good. He learned thereby to stand on his own legs, and to be careful in his intercourse with strangers. And this free, rambling, thrifty life, was to him the most agreeable in the world. But his greatest holiday was when he returned to his father. The time and place for their meeting he always knew before-hand. Then, when he related his little adventures, and could count down the kreutzers and even half-guilders he had gained by trade, and his father patted his cheek and praised him, he would not have changed places with a prince.



CHAPTER II.

THE PARTING.



THE experiment which Thaddeus Jordan had made with his son, having succeeded beyond expectation, he soon conceived the bold design of increasing his business. He still kept tinkering and hawking; but in one village and another he had become acquainted with a number of very poor people, day labourers and their families, who were in necessitous circumstances, and could hardly earn a living at all. These he encouraged to take up a kind of by-work, and he offered to assist them in it. So he set some of them to gather feathers, bristles, rags, bones, and such like things; others to look for healing herbs, and to dig for roots that he taught them to know. Then he bought their little stores, collected quantities in one place and another, and soon drove a flourishing trade with settled merchants, button-makers, cutlers, paper manufacturers, apothecaries, dyers, &c.

Any one who was not blind could see that the man was making money, but nobody knew or could find out what he did with it. He was always neatly yet coarsely clad, and Jonas too. The one, as well as the other, was satisfied with the meanest fare, and content when they had had enough. Beer seldom crossed their lips, wine never, and spirits were invariably refused, even if offered for nothing at all.

“The fellow is a miser, a skin-flint,” said many of his ragged acquaintances. “He scrapes together all he can, and buries his mammon somewhere. That would be a windfall for one of us to find, did one but know where it lies!” Others exclaimed: “Sly old fox! If he were not a rascal, he would have stuck to his trade and not have become a vagrant. Depend upon it, that amongst some no better than himself, and in no very reputable places either, he soon gets rid of all he filches here.”

Thaddeus let the folks slander to their hearts' desire, but kept his course quietly. He knew the rogues. Whoever has little to say for himself, mostly says less for his neighbour. Thaddeus knew best what he was doing, and why he did it. As often as he came to the town, he deposited his surplus cash in the Altenheim Savings' Bank, at interest. The investment, however, was in his son's name, and it was preserved with all a father's anxiety.

Even Master Fenchel was helped in this way. Through the hawker's industry and good repute, work flowed in upon him abundantly. Here was again a green shoot for him, that might have grown to a goodly branch, had he only watered it and kept away the burning brandy.

Several years passed away thus; but such a state of things could not last for ever. Father Thaddeus thought at length of letting his son learn some trade, instead of allowing him to grow up to this roving kind of life. What helps at a pinch is not always useful, any more than physic is when we are well. He spoke to friend Fenchel, who showed himself quite disposed to take the boy apprentice; and out of gratitude he even declined to accept any premium. But that could not be tolerated. Thaddeus paid; and because life is uncertain, had the whole affair properly put on

paper. He was a man who never did anything by halves, if he could avoid it; and always preferred what is settled and certain to mere probability. When this was done, his son had to accompany him on his round for the last time.

Ay, for the very last time; for on the way Thaddeus was seized with a mortal malady; and a great source of consolation it must have been to him to be tended by his child. As he could get no further, he was brought on a countryman's wagon to Altenheim, and taken to the town-hospital, where, tranquil and resigned, he lay many a day on a bed of pain.

When he at length felt the angel of death softly approaching his bed, he had little Jonas sent for from Fenchel's house. He gave him his paternal blessing on taking leave of him. He handed over to him, besides, a small sealed box, and spoke thus: "Take it, Jonas, take it: and mind, it is honourable wealth, hardly earned, in the summer's sun and winter's cold. It is thy inheritance. Nothing but light, rolled-up paper lies in the box, yet I tell thee it is worth full a thousand guilders. Therefore be careful not to talk about this box; show it to nobody; conceal it in the most secret place. To snatch such a morsel from thee, the most innocent dove might become a thievish raven. Only when the years of thy apprenticeship are over—not earlier—art thou to break the seal; and not then, even, if thou canst avoid it!"

Jonas took the light tin box; bitterly sobbing, he kissed his father's hand, and promised faithfully to observe the injunctions.

"I die contented," resumed the latter, "as I have lived contented. Do thou, my child, live and die even so. I will put into thy hand the best means and approved: 'Work and pray!' Work and prayer will provide thee with a good place, both in this world and the next.

“But, mark well! Work is, after all, only half the matter. The remaining half, and the most difficult, but the best, is *saving*. Of what use is it pouring continually into a leaky cask, that lets all out again?”

“In the first place, lay by for the day of need. Trouble enters every man’s house sooner or later. Therefore manfully do without all that may be done without. Nobody can look into the stomach to see whether wine and good cheer, or nothing but bread and water is there, and still we may be satisfied. When thou hast laid a trifle aside, and secured it, then work harder still, that thou mayst have wherewith to help a fellow-creature. God has not sent thee into the world for thyself alone, but for others also. Hadst thou been created for thyself alone, other people would not have been called into existence. When thou hast got a little surplus, and wisely applied it, thou art in a fair way for making a fortune; thou art not then dependent on the favour of others; thou art a free man, thine own master, and more so than many a baron; thou hast done enough for this world.

“So, my brave boy, *work and pray*. Praying is being near to the gracious God, and one with Him. A man is, however, never near to our Father in heaven, and one with Him, when he is at variance with his children, or hating them, envying, slandering, deceiving, or leading them astray. His children are the rest of mankind. Be just towards all, and kind to as many as thou canst. Prayer on the tongue and malice in the heart is no covenant with God, but with the devil. God is not deceived with smooth words, crocodile-tears, and promises. Whatever thou doest that is praiseworthy on earth will be a treasure to thee in heaven.

“Now go! God’s blessing upon thee, be thy father’s blessing for thee.”

Thus spoke the old Thaddeus.

He took an affecting farewell of his friend Fenchel, too, and earnestly commended to him poor Jonas.

"There is no need for it," replied the girdler, with his eyes full of tears; "there is no need for it! I know how much I am indebted to your care, and your son shall be repaid for it."

Thaddeus gave him his damp hand, and said: "I know very well that you do what is right towards the whole world, only, unluckily, not towards yourself. Do not take it amiss that I am, on that account, afraid for my Jonas. You and the evil spirit are already too good friends."

Master Fenchel arose affrighted, and thought that the sick man was raving. "What do you say about me?" exclaimed he; "the evil spirit? Who?"

"The wine spirit," was the answer. "He is the wickedest of all spirits; for where he comes in, the understanding goes out. Wine brings you drunken joy, and sober sorrow; sends little troubles out of the window, but leads the very greatest in at the door; it makes the head heavy, and the purse light. It is the ruin of our workmen that they are more anxious in an evening to please the beer and wine-shop keepers, than their own wives and children. When wine will serve no longer, they must have brandy. There is fire enough in that to burn up stomach, heart, and brain. Brandy is like aquafortis; it gradually eats into and gnaws through nerves and sinews, and at last destroys health and honour, peace and prosperity. At first the cry is, 'Surely a single glass a day can do no harm!' Afterwards we hear, 'A bottle full does me good!' Friend Fenchel, beware! Let the devil get but a hair of your head into his talons, and he will draw you by it down to destruction. Liquor, you often say, is only slow poison, and a man may grow old under it. Yet

it is a poison, and therefore poisonous in its influence ; it makes grey hairs foolish, and men dull, and stupid, and childish, before their time."

During this speech, Master Fenchel, like a culprit, looked down on the floor, very gloomy and dismal. Thaddeus would not distress him, gave him his hand again, and said : "Take no offence, my dear friend ; I meant well. But the dying cannot lie."

Three days after this, the good old man fell asleep, and awoke in eternity.





CHAPTER III.

THE APPRENTICE.

JONAS wept over his father a long time in silence. He was now an orphan ; without the counsel or the love of any relative ; a ward and an apprentice of the girdler. There was little pleasure for him, at first, in the house of this man. An ill-tempered old maid continually quarrelling and scolding, or when disposed to be quiet, grumbling and growling, ruled and regulated there according to her own good pleasure. Jonas had to carry her wood and water, to clean shoes, wash plates, fetch meat from the shambles, vegetables from the market, or perhaps half an ounce of snuff from shopkeeper Wester's, for the old lady's nose.

Two journeymen-girdlers who worked for the master, also took him into their service ; they played him tricks only when they were in pretty good humour ; but if the whim came into their heads, he had kicks and cuffs from them. Once, indeed, he did complain about it to the master, who replied for his comfort : " Those are workmen's ways, blockhead ! an apprentice must learn to put up with them. Thou'lt do the same when thou'rt a journeyman."

Fenchel treated him better than he did any one else in the house, and wished him well ; but he was a man without any education or instruction, and extremely fickle. The warning of the dying Thaddeus

had produced a deep impression upon him. In fact, for a few days he did not touch another drop of brandy. On the day of the funeral, however, he took a thimbleful; on the following day a small glass, and thus the old order of things, or rather disorder, was soon re-established.

Jonas submitted to his lot. What could he do? He thought so much the oftener of the pious lessons he had received from his father. His only source of joy and happiness in the house was Fenchel's child, Martha, a girl of five years old. As often as he could play with her, he forgot all his trouble; and the child, about whom the father troubled himself but too little, had no better refuge than Jonas.

The lad was fifteen years old when he went apprentice. He could not read properly, and still less write. A little reckoning by head he had learned in his pedlar life. But he felt ashamed when he saw that boys younger than he, understood even that better. He would have very much liked to go to school, and he promised his master to be very industrious if he might go; but the old maid could never spare him out of the house, and the master said: "Thou art to be a leather cutter, not a man of learning!" So the matter ended. It is no wonder that many of our tradesmen fall behindhand; without knowledge, often of the most necessary kind, and taken too early from school, they are put to business; there they learn and help mechanically to imitate what the master and his men mechanically do; and later in life are unfit to advance at all, because they have neither the necessary talent nor the information.

So Jonas learned all that the others knew and could do: how to make buttons and buckles, and plate them with gold and silver, prepare knife-handles, spoons and hooks, even metal ware for the soldiers' cartouche boxes

and helmets. That was all. "And that is enough," said the master, "to earn an honest livelihood by." Thus the boy did not learn much more; but he would have done if he had not thought of his father's lessons: cursing and swearing, for instance, from the journeymen; and from the old maid, all sorts of rubbish in the shape of belief in dreams, hobgoblins, ghosts and witches, that his father had ridiculed.

As he came into the room one Sunday evening, after his return from a walk, he saw the whole household standing in the deepest silence around an ugly old woman, who sat at a table, and from behind a gloomy lamp dealt out cards. She was the well-known fortune-teller of Altenheim, "Grey Nanny!" Jonas started at the unusual sight, and would have fled, afraid. But he was held back: he must have his fortune told too.

The old woman looked steadily awhile into the boy's anxious face, laid out the cards, and said, with quivering voice: "Fatherless and motherless thing, thou art born under good auspices; thou wilt go far, meet with great trouble, yet thy good star shall accompany thee. Two friends await thee. One shows thee the path of rectitude, the other is very rich. After long need, thou shalt have both house and court, yet foes as well. Then thy two friends cannot help thee. But thy small house shall swallow up the great one of another man!"

The less meaning there was in this prediction, so much the more heavily did it sit upon the mind of the boy. The journeymen plagued and jeered him a long time, because he seemed to believe the nonsense of the card-dealer; and he did indeed believe in it so much the more steadily and firmly, because he imagined himself already possessed of the two friends hinted at by the wise woman.

One of these was the son of the rich goldsmith, Kürbis; a boy two years older than he, whose acquaintance and friendship he had once won in a battle. Because Gideon Kürbis—for that was the youth's name—was the only son of opulent parents, who made a pet of him, he carried his head high; thought he knew better than any one else; was insolent, but cowardly withal. As, however, at taverns, and in parties of pleasure, he had always money to spend, so he had no want of comrades, who bore with a great deal from him. Yet, when he let his tongue take too much liberty, with a box on the ears or a blow of the fist, they tried to teach him better.

Jonas came up by chance one day in the midst of such a scene, when three of them were making poor Gideon cry out terribly. Jonas, conscious of his own strength and agility, ran to the rescue; springing like a cat on the back of the strongest of the rascals, he tore him down, and with his stick put the others to flight. Every Sunday after that, he had to accompany the cowardly Gideon as protector, on the promenades. The haughty mother's pet employed him as a body-guard, taught him lessons, treated him to pies and tarts, and good boiled and roast. Jonas liked that; it was very different from anything in Fenchel's house.

The second of these friends was the shopkeeper, Wester, from whose house Jonas had to fetch sometimes snuff for the old maid, and sometimes cheese for the journeymen. He was a friendly, true-hearted man, that had known old Thaddeus well, and had often done him a good turn during his pedlar wanderings. Hence he drew the poor orphan to him as much as he could; let him come to his house in leisure hours, and even taught him reading, writing, and arithmetic. So Jonas thought: "This is he who

shows me the right way." He was not far out. The shopkeeper and his wife treated him almost as if he had been their own child.

Five years fled thus. Then he received his indentures, was acknowledged a journeyman, and had therewith the right and the obligation from his guild to travel for improvement. He had long sighed for this. A couple of years before already Gideon Kürbis had gone abroad, or rather been taken, in the mail coach.

Now he made no delay in packing up his knapsack and starting. The tin box of Father Thaddeus, however, he did not take with him, on account of the risks of travel, but entrusted it to honest shopkeeper Wester, on bidding him farewell. He would have had the same confidence in his own master, Fenchel, but this man had given himself up too much to drink, had neglected his home and business, and could hardly find work for a single journeyman.

Parting with him was easy, but so much the more difficult was leaving his child, little Martha, now ten years old. In heart-broken anguish she threw herself upon the neck of the weeping Jonas, and could not and would not let him go. In him she lost her playmate—her only friend in the house.

"Farewell! farewell!" cried Jonas. "Do not cry, for God is our Father. We shall see each other again in a few years!"





CHAPTER IV.

THE JOURNEYMAN'S RETURN HOME.

BUT five and six years went by before he returned from his travels to Altenheim ; and as he came in at the gate, and strode through the streets cheerily, how strangely altered everything appeared to him ! The streets seemed to have become narrower, the court-yards smaller. What had been young was grown older ; what had been old lay in the grave. And as the people knew him no longer, so he did not know the people. He had shot up strong and sinewy ; was sun-burnt ; he had seen and suffered much ; had an earnest, intelligent look, yet was good-natured and modest.

His first visit was to Master Fenchel. He wanted to give him a pleasant surprise ; then ask for a lodging at his house, and make his "masterpiece" in the shop where, as apprentice, he had learned his business.

The house had been newly whitewashed, and had large windows in it with looking-glasses at the sides. He knocked, entered a handsomely-furnished room, and felt half afraid he was in the wrong place.

"Remain on the outside there, and ring," cried a man with a pen behind his ear. "Journeyman out of work should not come into people's houses to ask for help!"

Jonas stood stupefied : "I beg pardon," said he, "but does not Master Fenchel live here now?"

The answer was, "The girdler? He has been dead years. Commissioner Schnurr lives here."

Jonas sighed ; said softly, "Dead !" and left the house with a troubled soul. Now he took his way to the dwelling of shopkeeper Wester, not without inward anxiety and fear lest this man might also have gone to his eternal rest. His heart, however, beat high with joy as he saw in the distance his worthy friend, standing, according to custom, before the glass door of his shop. He went in greeting, and then stood with his hat off before him. Wester cast a hasty glance at the figure beside him, covered with dust, a knapsack on his back, and worn shoes on his feet : with an air of indifference he put his hand into his waistcoat pocket, took out a small coin, and offered it.

"Oh ! oh ! Herr Wester," said the visitor, smiling. "I am not come begging. Don't you know Jonas Jordan now ? Is he quite forgotten ?"

The shopkeeper started. When, however, he had convinced himself of the reality of the unexpected appearance, he raised both arms on high in joyful astonishment, welcomed his friend with a hearty shake of the hand, and led him into the house. Here Frau Wester received the young man with no less astonishment and satisfaction, showed him a comfortable bedroom, and insisted on his staying and boarding with them, until he had found some other lodging in the house of a saddler, where he could work at his "masterpiece." This he met with fortunately in a few days after he had called, coarsely but cleanly clad, on most of the masters in the town.

Although he made no further use of the hospitality of Master Wester, there was seldom an evening in the week, some portion of which was not spent with him. He had many strange tales to tell of his travels, and also much to hear of what had befallen the good folks at Altenheim. Amongst other things, he heard of Master Fenchel's unhappy end.

This miserable man, by the constant daily use of brandy, had lost all strength of mind and body, and all pleasure and pride in business pursuits; cheated by his maid and the journeymen, he had ended his days in bitter poverty; and had left nothing behind him but debts, and his daughter Martha. She had been taken to the town orphan-house, and again discharged, as soon as she was old enough to go to service. What had become of her since, nobody knew.

This was very grievous news for the good Jonas. So much the more joyous was it to hear of the fortune of his former companion, Gideon Kürbis. This man, though only a goldsmith, was now a personage of some consideration. He lived, as the saying is, in grand style. From his father, who died early, as well as from his mother, he had inherited large property. He was married, and had two children—a boy, named Edwin, and a girl, named Ida.

“These Christian names of the newest fashion,” added Frau Wester to her husband’s account, and smiling sarcastically, “show you already that Herr and Madame K. belong to a higher region. And Herr Gideon dare not call his spouse Rosine: she is *Rosa*. Her father was a wine-merchant, and rich as a Jew; but he was a grasping, grinding, hard-hearted usurer. I can well remember that for a long time she wore dresses which her father had made for her, out of nothing but cast off clothes of her mother and grandmother. She might have married long ago. There was no want of suitors, for where money is they fail as little as flies about honey and sugar. But no one seemed to her handsome, and noble, and accomplished enough. She was very fond of novel-reading, and still is to this very day. Who knows what enchanting prince she hoped for?”

“How came she then to marry Gideon?” asked

Jonas, curiously. "To my certain knowledge he never discovered the philosopher's stone, though he does think himself wiser than most folks."

Frau Wester shrugged her shoulders: "Well, perhaps the expected prince did not come. Miss Rosine was nearly forty; at least ten years older than the goldsmith when the latter came home from his travels. Hence he seemed just a match for her. Only she had a great deal of fault to find with his unpoetical name. Herr Kürbis, however, could no more lay aside that than she could her face. Besides her paternal inheritance, she brought him one of the largest and handsomest houses in the castle-yard that an uncle had left her. As soon as she was mistress of the house, a lady's maid, cook, coachman, with carriage, and a pair of splendid horses, must be had. There's high life there, I assure you. You will hardly know Gideon again!"

Jonas shook his head, and said: "I am afraid of visiting Gideon in his own house, although I would like to do so. But copper kreutzers and Dutch ducats don't well accord. When an apprentice he was stiff as a stork, but now he seems to be stilted as high as an ostrich."



CHAPTER V.

MASTER JORDAN.



THOUGH Jonas was very diligent, many weeks passed before he had finished the heavy task by which he was to raise himself to the rank of master. There were the same customs at Altenheim, unluckily, as at many other places. His task was to draw on copper, without rule or compass, and according to a given plan, the Prince's family crest; the work was to be richly gilded. He succeeded beyond expectation, was praised, and admitted into the masters' guild. The reception was accompanied with much pomp, strange ceremonies, and feasting afterwards, in old-fashioned burgher style. All this cost money. Just when a poor journeyman most needs his little capital for making a start, he was to waste it on worthless matters. And what was Jonas to do with the costly crest that nobody bought? He had made remonstrances to the guild about proceedings so injurious to young beginners, but in vain. Some construed what he said into secret fear of being unable to accomplish the task; again, such expense was well adapted to impede the reception of masters into the guild, whereby the masters already in business would have fewer rivals to contend with.

In the meantime, Jonas had received his father's tin box, with unbroken seal, from the hand of the honest shopkeeper, and began to make use of the

treasure. For him it was indeed a treasure ; as the capital, which had been lying in the savings' bank for ten years, was now increased by interest and compound interest to more than 1,600 guilders. He rejoiced in silence ; but his joy was moderated as by little and little, in spite of the most rigid economy, he saw his wealth melt away.

Without reckoning the heavy expenses of his mastership, or of clothing, washing, and furniture, in the hired lodgings and workshops, no small sum was requisite for the purchase of different kinds of tools—a lathe, an anvil, crucibles, dies, graving implements, steel pins, hammers, chisels, tongs, scissors, &c. ; and also for the purchase of brass and pinchbeck ware, copper, silver, lead, quicksilver, varnish, brimstone, tartar borax, and other things indispensable for labour. He had also taken without premium an apprentice, the child of very poor people, to help him. He would have been very glad to put the rest of his money out to interest again, but he had to provide the means of subsistence for at least one year in advance ; for he had to begin with neither wares nor customers. In addition, there was another thing on his mind, weighing more than all beside.

While he was working with his pupil from early morning until late at night, making metal buttons and buckles, hafts and hooks, knife-handles, spoons, and ornaments of all kinds, he thought of the companion of his youth, the rich Gideon Kürbis, whom he had long wished to visit. To this man he might perhaps be able to recommend himself and his wares—nay, dispose of the costly crest to him.

So he went one Sunday, after morning service, to the beautiful mansion in the castle-yard. On going in, even, he felt himself constrained and ill at ease. But it was not the size or splendour of the place,

the galleries, pillars, and broad staircases, that embarrassed him; his sound, sterling sense saw in these only masterpieces of masonry and plaster work. But he was shocked by an un-Sabbath-like screaming, scolding, and quarrelling, of male and female voices. From a shopman, who led him to the apartment of Herr Kürbis, he learned—and the shopman sneered as he spoke—that Madame did not know again where she had left the key of the cupboard: hunting for keys was nothing unusual in the house; everybody must be roused to help to look. “Nice order this; nice keeping of the Sabbath-day holy,” thought Jonas, as he waited at the door of the apartment until he was announced by the servant. Gladly would he have gone back again, for even in this room he heard the shrill and harsh notes of discord between man and wife.

“Eh! is that you, Master Jonas?” cried Herr Kürbis, with forced friendliness, on his entrance. “Rosa, dear, this is the girdler, Jonas Jordan—a good man and true, moreover”—added he, as he took the hand of his spouse adroitly, and squeezed it with a certain tenderness, as though there had been nothing amiss between the dear people. Then, again addressing his visitor: “And, *nota bene!* what brings you hither, master?”

Jonas looked with a little astonishment at this sudden change of feature; for even Madame Kürbis brought her surly mien into a somewhat smoother aspect, though not without effort.

“Well, now, Herr Kürbis,” said Jonas; “it would have been better had I come sooner to visit an old comrade, but——”

“Comrade?” interrupted Kürbis, with the air of one to whom the word brought back unpleasant associations. “Aye, aye, I remember; but, *nota*

bene, comrade, the times have a little altered since then."

Jonas made a bow, and continued, with a smile : "True, and men more than the times. I understand. Fortune has taken up her abode with you. I am glad of it, though she has left me in the lurch. No matter, I am but a young beginner, who would like to recommend himself and his wares to rich customers like you."

"But," chimed in Madame Kürbis, "there are so many folks coming to us to recommend themselves ; one does not know where in the world to begin or to leave off with them. Now that I think of it, however, come again next week, master. We do want for our equipage, very badly, a handsomer set of harness, with plated rings and bits, if you understand such work properly."

"Hush ! Rosa dear," interrupted Herr Kürbis, before she could finish : then, drawing up his stately figure, with a very patronising air and much condescension, he questioned his old comrade, who still remained modestly standing, as to what he had seen and learned in foreign parts. Where he had worked ? Whether he had been in Geneva, Lyons, Paris, Berlin ? At the same time giving him to understand that he had lived in all these places, and been much noticed. He had not gone there for work—no ! but to establish a business connection with the cleverest jewellers, from whom he now had his goods ; and also to refine his taste ; for to do aught of the kind at Altenheim, was an absolute impossibility. He told tales of theatres, actresses, English horse-riders at Paris and at Berlin, all with a vast deal of self-satisfaction.

The young girdler, who understood very little of all this nonsense, began to feel tired, and was think-

ing of a civil retreat, when a maiden was announced as wanting to enter into the service of Madame Kürbis.

“Is the creature decently clad?” asked the lady of the house. When the question had been answered in the affirmative, the petitioner was admitted, and examined with searching glance; her humble curtsy was acknowledged with a slight nod, but the modest expression of her wishes met with nothing but silence. She was a maiden of seventeen; no beauty, it is true, and of very slight frame, yet uncommonly pleasing in appearance, and with a sweet expression of face.

“In whose service art thou now?” was the first question put by Madame Kürbis, while she continued her inquisitive gaze.

“I am in the house of the hosier Kneller, of Neckendorf, two leagues from here,” answered the little timid one.

“They are a very vulgar set; I know the folks. Dost thou know aught of what is needful in good housekeeping? I almost doubt it,” said the goldsmith’s lady.

“I can cook, bake, clean, wash, mend, and knit,” replied the maid.

“That is of no use to me. I want a proper lady’s-maid, and thou dost not seem at all like one. What dost thou know of sewing?” said she again, abruptly.

“I have also learned sewing, hemming and plaiting, flat-stitch, chain-stitch, cross-stitch, fore and back-stitch,” answered the maiden.

“Yes, I hear, if there be only any truth in it,” replied Madame Kürbis; “I will make inquiry about thee. I have been often deceived by such women-folk, who imagined they knew everything, and yet, after all, turned out the stupidest geese on earth.

What is thy name? Where dost thou come from?"

"My name is Martha Fenchel, and I am the daughter of a burgher here."

Jonas started on hearing this name. He turned his back on the goldsmith, and looked hard at the maiden, who was still being interrogated by the lady. "By my life, it is she!" exclaimed he, overjoyed. "What we give up for lost, often comes at last! Do not take it amiss, Madame Kürbis, but I should like to say a word here too. Martha, dear Martha! where in the world hast thou hidden thyself? I have sought thee for more than half a year, and asked after thee at every turn and corner. Dost thou know me no more? I am Jonas!"

During this address he took the hand of the affrighted maiden, and drew her to him. Martha blushed, looked the happy man in the face, and was mute.

"Say something, then, thou simpleton! Hast thou forgotten Jonas? Ay, I see it well. Women have long skirts, but short memories. Out of sight, out of mind!"

"Oh, Jonas!" murmured she; regarding him, and forgetting herself and all about her; "how tall thou—I mean you—are become!"

"What!" said he, angrily; "*you!* I am no *you*, but still thine old *thou*. Don't make me high, for my house-door is low, and I guard myself carefully against the devil Pride. Come, we have now much to say to each other. Do not take it amiss, Herr and Madame Kürbis: this maiden shall not come into service here, though I go begging! Farewell! Come, Martha."

She resisted for a moment, in confusion.

"Master Jonas," said the goldsmith, bringing his

right foot forwards, and strutting like a peacock :
“ Master Jonas, your conduct is anything but respectable ; it is low and vulgar, I must tell you ! ”

It was easy to see from his face that the peaceful girdler had become very excited, partly from the haughty reception he had met with, partly through Martha's sudden appearance. In a tone of defiance, he replied : “ Master Gideon, that course of conduct suits me. I only follow my betters. Perhaps you are not quite a match for a Paris dancing-master yourself in matters of politeness ! Do you understand ? ”

“ How ? what ? ” cried Herr Kürbis. “ Do you know where you are ? Before whom you stand ? Do you think you are in a tavern, among your equals ? ”

“ If not in a tavern,” was the answer, “ still among my equals ! Goldsmith or blacksmith, I don't care a straw ! You, Master Gideon, have more money than I—that I know. Men bow to money ; but you are no gold—only the box that holds it ! ”

Here Madame Kürbis, in a fury, planted both her hands on her hips, and screamed : “ Was there ever so shameless a mortal seen as that ? ”

“ Oh, yes, Madame Kürbis,” interrupted Jonas ; “ just look in the glass.”

Now the lady became violent. A flood of hard epithets burst from her lips. Master Jonas looked towards the door, snatched up his hat with comic haste, exclaiming, “ Lord have mercy on us ! Here comes a storm ! Umbrellas are of no use now. Let every one save himself that can—and keep dry. Adieu ! ”

Therewith he took Martha's hand, and pulled her along with him out of the house.



CHAPTER VI.

PLEASURE AND PAIN.

“**W**ELL! my mistress at Neckendorf is a bad one,” said Martha, as they both stood in the street; “but this woman would be ten times worse, I am afraid. I do not know what to do. Until Easter I must remain here.”

“Nothing so bad but it may be worse,” said Jonas, soothingly, and led her to his dwelling, to share his dinner with her. At first, indeed, she refused to go, feeling ashamed, yet she followed gladly. She wanted to hear and learn so much from the friend of her childhood; and he pressed her so warmly not to refuse the little refreshment a cookshop would afford, promising at the same time to accompany her on her way back to the village. So they went along the streets slowly side by side, both anxious, yet joyous, at heart.

The blooming, shrinking maiden pleased him well; and he would have avowed it, had he not felt more and more bashful the more he looked at her. She, however, regarded him from time to time, though only sideways and hastily, with eyes that sparkled with a mixture of astonishment, joy, and tenderness. “But no!” said she, continually, amidst her own remarks—“but no! thou art grown so tall now, like quite an-

other creature. It is not right in me, Jonas, assuredly ; I ought not to be so free with thee."

With genuine maiden modesty she entered the house of her former playfellow, and the cleanly sitting-room, in which, though far from expecting it, she found no trace of bachelor housekeeping : everything was neat and comfortable ; there was not a spot upon the floor, nor a particle of dust in the corners. Around the walls stood six straw-bottomed chairs ; two deal tables were before the stove, and a new clock hung above. Between the windows and the white curtains was a little looking-glass.

"Thou art living here very nicely, Jonas," said she, when her eyes had been cast over all ; "who keeps the house so clean and in so good order for thee?"

Master Jordan, a little flattered by the question, answered primly : "Who should but mine own father's son?"

"Where dost thou get the time, then?" asked she again. "Thou hast enough to do all day with thy work."

He laughed and replied : "He who does everything at the right time, and in the right place, can get through a great deal in sixteen hours a day."

While his apprentice was gone to fetch something from the cookshop, Master Jordan led his lady guest into the little front shop, into the cleaned-up workshop, into the empty kitchen, and at last into the dormitory, where his own bed and the apprentice's stood, both covered with snow-white blankets. Martha went looking about her, very business-like, and thinking to herself all sorts of things. Then she smiled at him, and said : "Why, thou art as rich as a prince, Jonas. Thou shouldst be content, I think."

He shrugged his shoulders, and sighed strangely. "Oh! every one has some drawback to complain of.

Were the words *if* and *but* not under Heaven, we should be already in Heaven : even in Paradise Adam was not happy alone !”

Martha, a little embarrassed, looked at the windows and the door, as though she were afraid, yet did not know why. Then she continued : “I only meant to say, any one might live here very comfortably !”

He took her hand, and asked in a low voice, “Wouldst thou like to live here, Martha ?”

“Dinner is ready on the table !” said the apprentice, as he entered the room through the open door, very inopportunistly for his master, but very opportunistly for the anxious maiden.

They went into the room, and to table, where a couple of dishes were smoking. With a clear voice Jonas offered up his usual prayer, but this time, perhaps, with less than his usual devotion.

The presence of the apprentice at dinner kept the conversation very general. Various involuntary by-thoughts, however, were perhaps more important than all that was said. Feminine society had a wonderful effect, at least on Master Jordan. His little room seemed to him ten times handsomer than before ; the viands tasted better ; even the sunbeams were more festal and Sabbath-like, as they streamed through the window curtains.

Directly after dinner, the lad went away ; then the former confidential tone returned, and Jonas, as he had more than once been asked, recounted his travels and adventures abroad : how he had risen to mastership, yet unluckily had too little work and custom. Martha, on her side, had to tell of her hard fate after the death of her father, and of the severe treatment during the four years’ residence in the orphan-house. But she did not forget to acknowledge with gratitude, that she had received excellent instruction and train-

ing in all sorts of domestic occupations, in kitchen, cellar and garden work, and in many womanly matters, so as to be able to fill a respectable place in the very best houses. She had not yet had the good fortune to obtain such a place. She had been engaged thus far as maid of all work, in ordinary burgher households, and sometimes been driven away by the coarseness or vulgarity of the masters, sometimes by the spite and shrewishness of the mistresses. This had been her lot at hosier Kneller's, and hence she was obliged to look out for another place.

The joylessness of the past, and dark aspect of the future, afforded so much matter for discussion, that it could not be exhausted either in Jordan's little room, or on the road to Neckendorf, whither the young master accompanied Fenchel's daughter. On parting, an agreement was made to see each other again every Sunday; but to save Martha's feet and her good name, it was to be near where she lived, not in the tattling town.

On his way back to Altenheim, Master Jordan had all sorts of gloomy thoughts, as every one who met him on the road might see at a glance, from the changing hue of his features. He had much to rejoice at, much to repent of. He rejoiced at having found again the child of the unfortunate Fenchel, who, after the death of his father, Thaddeus, had been his first and greatest source of delight. He was pleased with her gentle, modest form; her good-natured, endearing disposition; the cheerful tone of her voice, the pure and peaceful soul that sparkled in her eyes—now laughing, now weeping, now praying. But he regretted that his understanding had lost its balance in the morning when he recognised Martha: that he had pained and insulted the goldsmith Gideon, in his own house, at their first friendly visit. This he bitterly repented.

It is very true that, in excuse for this over-hasty conduct, he had a great deal to say; it is true that he cared very little for the favour and friendship of the proud Herr Kürbis; but so much the more did he care for self-respect, and for the satisfaction of always doing what right, and duty, and the spirit of Christianity enjoined. He resolved immediately to do penance, and he did it. As soon as he had entered the town, and arrived at Gideon's house in the castle-yard, he went in at once.

"Herr and Madame Kürbis," said he to them, on finding them together at the tea-table: "I forgot myself in your presence this morning: I now beg your pardon this evening. Do not let the sun go down on your wrath; you know that anger is madness: I cannot think what it was that made me so warm this morning. Forget and forgive, I beg of you: let there be peace between us!"

At first the noble couple thought of turning the good-tempered petitioner out of doors; then Herr and Madame tried hard which should abuse him most; they next listened a little to his acknowledgment of their loftier position in life: gradually they grew gentler; and at last, were reconciled to him.

Jonas, in his heart, pitied the people, and, glad at having conquered himself, went home.





CHAPTER VII.

THE WOOER.

BUT as he entered his room, things did not look nearly so well as they had done at midday. Martha had said any one might live there very comfortably, yet everything seemed to him silent and dreary.

He sat down upon the chair on which she had sat, and turned over in his mind matters that he had often pondered on. He was forced to admit, that the truth of those words of the Bible, "It is not good that the man should be alone," was plain and clear as the sun at noon-day. A bachelor is but half a man his whole life long. Yet where to find the other half, and the suitable one, was a puzzle not easy to explain.

In shopkeeper Wester's house this had often been a subject of debate, and in many different ways. Frau Wester particularly had been very active and suggestive; for she knew the secrets of half the households in the town, as well as if she could see through their walls. And Master Jordan too had not failed to make use of his eyes, as we may give credit to a young man of his age for doing. He had looked as keenly as he could into the blue, black, and brown eyes of several of the good burghers' daughters; and from more than one of them had met with a glance of welcome in return.

"I stand among the maidens of our land," he used

to say to Frau Wester, "as if in an orchard. They are blooming all together, and the blossom pleases me, yet I cannot foresee the crop that will come of it. I do not know the sort of fruit that the tree will bear. The wooer's game is a throw for life. I would venture on it, if our hand-workers had in general received a better training. What husband and wife have not, they cannot give to their children. They think that a marriageable daughter is ripe fruit, that will not bear keeping. So the poor girl is fitted out in the newest fashion, and sent, like a lady of *ton*, to ball-rooms and theatres, to church and public places, as though these were maiden-marts and universal bazaars. Instead of a worsted stocking or a knitting needle, Ma'amselle takes up the tambouring frame; instead of a prayer-book, the looking-glass; instead of her eye being all over the house, from the cellar to the garret, she is gazing through the window, after 'gentlemen;' or thumping on the piano, and singing, that her sweet voice may be heard in the street.

"It is the curse connected with our hand-workers' daughters, that they want to get above their condition in life; to be somebody of importance, or to become such, that they may lead lazy lives, cover coarse clothing with muslin and silk, and make smooth, rosy faces hide thorns on the heart. And what is the end of the story?

"If they happen to be left in the lurch, old maids, they scold and scandalise like a lot of house sparrows; next they become notable tea-table friends, fawning and spiteful; lastly, they turn devotees, and ogle the skies, for want of something to ogle on earth.

"If they should be fortunate enough to ensnare a man of property, then pride stares one everywhere full in the face: a coach or a chaise is soon called for: but if, instead of a fat carp, they can catch in the pool

of matrimony nothing better than a lean gudgeon, then, oh dear ! oh dear ! they go snapping and snarling to bed and board ; out of doors they are belted and braced ; in the house, they are dismal and dirty. The husband has holes in his stockings, the poor boy has his trousers torn. But they did not learn labour in the singing-school, nor frugality in the ball-room. The woman carries away from the house more on her back than the man can bring into it with his biggest wagon."

In spite of such considerations, however, Martha became dearer and dearer to him every Sunday. He thought of her continually ; how beautiful and business-like she would be as a wife. He did not even conceal from Frau Wester the growing affection, but said to her : " Here, if anywhere, head and hat properly fit. If ever maiden had excellent training, this one has had it, for God himself has brought her up in the school of adversity."

Yet when Frau Wester exclaimed, " Then take her to the altar ; and the sooner the better !" he shook his head, and thought it best to " make no more haste than good speed." " Justice," said he, " has the grey star only, but Love the black one ; I must know more of the maiden, and learn whether another bird has not already nestled in her heart. Suspicion is a bad thing, yet caution keeps one from falling !"

Frau Wester easily found out where Martha had been in service in the town ; she made many inquiries about the young woman's conduct, and communicated what she heard. Master Jordan himself had not failed in inquiries. He even found a pretence for getting into conversation with the wife of the hosier Kneller, without Martha's knowledge. " The wench will be the death of me," cried Frau Kneller. " She spoils all she lays her hands on. Sometimes the

baking pots come to pieces in her fingers ; at other times she tears in the wash, sheets that have worn well ever since the marriage of my husband's grandmother. I believe—though God forgive me the sin !—that the ill-favoured creature is in love. At one time she puts too much salt in the soup, at another too little. One day, she burns the roast potatoes, another she poisons the herring salad with onions, that I never eat. And still the stupid goose imagines she knows better than I do. Once, when I had gone out for the day, she scrubbed and scoured the whole house, from top to bottom, instead of going into the field with seedlings and pig-beans. Another time she sat up late at night without my order, mending the children's clothes, and burning oil to no purpose. No day goes by, without some kind of trouble with her. I will have the creature out of the house, and the sooner the better. ”

Jonas had heard enough. He thought to himself : “What the very devil must praise, in spite of him, no honourable man need be afraid of. Martha shall be mine, or nobody shall.”

He thought so only, but did not tell any one, not even the person on whom the decision depended. He merely conducted her to his friends the Westers, who received the poor girl for a time into their own house, until a better place could be found for her. Here he first learned to know the sweet disposition, sound sense, and many valuable qualities which the noble-minded maid possessed, but which modesty had hitherto led her to conceal. He never failed to spend his evening in the shopkeeper's little back parlour. Frau Wester had made Martha not only her help-mate, but her friend ; and she said to Jonas : “Within a few weeks Martha has become indispensable to me ; so quiet, yet so striving and stirring, she under-

stands her business far better than I do. If you do not marry her soon I will try if I cannot secure her for myself, and never let her go from me !”

But one morning Master Jordan sent his apprentice with a message : “ Miss Fenchel was to come to him directly, he had found a good place for her.” Martha hastened thither gladly.

“ Hast thou found a place for me, dear Jonas ?” asked she, giving him her hand gratefully. “ Thank God ! I began to fear becoming troublesome to our kind friends. Come, tell me where ?”

He looked anxiously into her joyous blue eyes ; then, in confusion, down to the ground ; then again upwards to the roof of the room, and round the four sides, as though he were seeking something lost.

“ Come, tell me, then,” repeated she. “ Why art thou silent ?”

He collected himself, and began, hesitating, “ It is—but Martha—thou must not be angry with me.”

In surprise, she smiled. “ Angry with thee, Jonas ? If I would be, and should be, could I be ?”

“ Listen, Martha, I will show thee—I must tell thee—I know a man anxious to have thy heart and hand—who—even who——”

“ Oh, Jonas ! scold me rather, but do not make mockery of me, a poor maiden,” exclaimed she, shocked or hurt, while her face lost all its colour, and she turned from him.

“ Martha, look at me. He is assuredly no bad man. I will bring him to thee ; I will give him to thee myself.”

“ No, Jonas ! no ! From thee, least of all, can I receive a lover.”

“ From me, least of all !” asked he, with visible emotion. “ From me, least of all ! And if—I don’t know—if I would give thee myself—Look at me, Martha ! Tell me.”

Here silence ensued. She stood before him with down-cast eyes, and glowing cheeks, and played with her apron-string. Then, as if still doubting, she looked up again, her eyes swimming with tears, and said, with trembling lips, "What must I say, then?"

Jonas took courage, and whispered, half aloud: "Dost thou love me with all thy heart?"

Half aloud, Martha whispered back, "Thy heart knows it."

"Canst thou be satisfied with dry bread and salt?"

"Rather salt from thee than tears from me!"

"Martha, I will work for thee: wilt thou save for me?"

"I will be sparing in everything, except my own pains!"

"Well, then, darling, here is my hand. Take it. Wilt thou be mine?"

"Was I not thine, eight years ago and more? Even as a child? Yet no! It ought not to be, Jonas."

Alarmed, he looked her in the face, and asked: "Not be? and why?"

"Think well over it, Jonas. Do thyself no injustice. I am a poor creature, without portion or property. Any other burgher's daughter in the town would be glad to give thee her hand and heart, and a good dowry beside. Thou might live much happier."

"Say nothing about that!" cried Jonas, stretching out both his hands imploringly. "Be still; I shall feel that I am but beginning to live, if thou wilt promise to live with me."

"Live, then," said she, in blushing embarrassment, and gave him her hand.

He took her hand, and at the same time clasped his bride to his bosom, that heaved with unwonted emotion. She wept on his breast, in silent joy.



CHAPTER VIII.

THE WEDDING SERMON.



THREE weeks later, the nuptials were thrice announced from the public pulpit. In the fourth week, Jonas and Martha, accompanied by Herr and Frau Wester, went to the altar to exchange the pledge of everlasting love and fidelity. Nobody regarded the young married couple. Who does regard people that have nothing and are nothing? But whoever cast a glimpse at the simply-clad pair, as they went by, would confess that they were happily matched; worthy of and dear to each other; he of her through noble manliness, she of him through womanly charms.

In honour of the nuptials, Jonas had ordered a little feast in one of the most beautiful pleasure gardens before the gates of Altenheim. Thither he led his bride, and the two guests, from the church to a retired arbour, festooned with honey-suckles and vines. Vases of flowers decorated the table, and a couple of bottles of wine stood beside plain every-day food. Dainties there were none.

“This is as it should be!” said Jonas, embracing his bride. “Make yourselves happy, dear friends! Merry hearts and well-filled platters; what would one wish for more? A pompous wedding is but weary work. More is often spent in such a day than can be earned in a whole year; and many a man cripples himself for life, through the dancing at his bridal.”

“Cleverly spoken, Master Jordan,” cried Herr Wester; “and our young burghers would bear it in mind, too, if they had not more money than wit.”

Now they seated themselves, and cracked many a jest at table. The shopkeeper and the master-girdler became warm friends, and pledged each other heartily. Frau Wester and Martha sat together like sisters. Never had the earnest Jordan been seen so full of fun. His drollery was inexhaustible. His soul seem basking in sunshine. Only now and then, when the mirth of the others grew boisterous, he became lost for a moment in silence. He was reflecting, and looking forward joyously to the future.

“Cheer up, man! cheer up!” cried Herr Wester, when he saw Jonas again sitting silent and thoughtful. “Thy face is sad enough to turn the wine sour in the bottles and glasses. I’d lay a wager thou’rt thinking now of what the priest said to thee, though I fear thy thoughts were wandering then.”

“Very likely,” replied the bridegroom, smiling; “but I think, had I been in his place, I would have said something else.”

“Well, now! let us hear Master Jordan!” said the bridesman. “See, our church under the blue vault of Heaven, is much larger and finer than the plaster roof of our cathedral.”

“Ay, Jonas! let us hear,” said Martha. “I would like to listen to thy preaching, for once. We will be a very attentive congregation.”

“Come, come, good people!” continued Herr Wester, “pledge me! With our glasses we’ll ring to church. Look ye, Mr. Parson is clearing his throat already.”

They pledged each other amid laughter; Master Jordan the merriest among them. But then he laid his knife and fork aside, put his plate away, assumed

a more serious air, and said : " So be it ! Well-timed folly is better than ill-timed wit. The cassock does not make the clergyman. Mind my words. And what I say to thee, dear Martha, is said to me too. You others, also, please to remember, that sober sense may be sometimes sweetened by seeming nonsense."

After this introduction, he cleared his voice again, and continued : " My attentive hearers ! There is an old adage, ' Married life, harried life ! ' This shall be my text to-day, for your instruction. Another says, it is true, that ' Marriages are made in Heaven.' This, however, is seldom the case, and then only in the heaven which we bear about with us in a pious heart. Most marriages are contracted in the ledger, and concluded according to the weight of the cash-box ; some are estimated by the height, length, and breadth of the family pedigree, or by rank and station in life ; others again have their origin in blind sensuality, wherein, intoxicated by passion, each idolises the other ; but, when sober, discovers that a fiend prompted the worship. Then is ' married life, harried life,' and the anticipated endless spring proves perpetual winter.

" Verily I say unto you, with money, wares may be bought, and men may be purchased like wares too, but happiness cannot be had at such a price. Gold is a metal so hard and so cold that it can cool the warmest hearts and harden the softest ones. Genealogies joined together, and agreement in gentilities, make no union of souls ; these things are but shadows, which may blend, but they neither warm nor chill. And passion and sensuality are not the high prerogatives of man : he has them in common with the brutes.

" Now for the application : or how, in every trouble of life, wedlock may not bring woe, but weal ; and in the saddest hours, serve as a support.

“Beauty in man, as in woman, is the natural magnet which draws both together, man and woman. Such a magnet costs us nothing; it is an endowment that has been lent to us, and one that we must give back again to time, from whom we received it. The magnet attracts more strongly than it binds. The rust of custom weakens its power. Beauty is a borrowed ball costume. When the ball is over, the dress is done with.

“But there is a kind of beauty by which we may please for ever. It is nothing borrowed, but earned; it is the reward of merit, and therefore our perpetual property. I will endeavour, Martha, to please thee all my life, and even with a face full of wrinkles to keep thy heart bound to me. Dear bride, do thou try as much for me.

“To this end the blessing of God must be with us in silence and in secret. We shall receive it in solitary communion with Him, that is, in prayer; and through the drawing near of our souls to God—that is, through divine deed and meditation. If the blessing of Heaven is upon thee, thou wilt easily remain ever beautiful in my eyes, and be to me ever a bride.

“Then, as a wife, thou wilt continue chaste and modest as the virgin thou art to-day. For the chief charm of beauty lies in its rarity and in its reserve. That which is common has no attraction, only that which is seldom seen.

“Then, as my wife, thou wilt be as much one with me before the world, as thou art to-day, my bride! Ay, Martha! as I am thine alone, body and soul, so be mine only; let one mind animate us both; let my thought be thy thought; thy secret be my secret; let me be dear to thee as thou to me, at all hours, and plainly, as before the All-seeing. Then we shall stand first towards each other; all other people, even

our best friends, will be but secondary in consideration to us. Distrust in the heart is the canker of love.

"Then wilt thou, as a wife and a matron, be beautiful as thou art to-day a blushing virgin. The best preservative of female beauty is neither silk nor pearls, but cleanliness and good taste in arrangement. A woman is the soul of a house; therefore, let the house, and every room in it, faithfully represent her. Then wilt thou prove, while a wife, the truth of what thou hast just promised—to be sparing of everything, except thy own pains. Thy thrift will be a blessing upon my labour, and the dear God will not withdraw Himself from us. Amen."

The orator ceased, and bowed with comic courtesy all around to his audience. But nobody laughed. Wester, confounded, looked on him silently and earnestly, as though still listening to him speaking. His wife and the bride sat with moistened eyes.

"Come, come: don't be sad," said Jonas. But Martha sprang up, and, throwing her arms around him, cried, "Thou hast wedded us anew, darling! This is my church, and here the altar!"

At last the shopkeeper opened his mouth and said: "I tell thee what, Jordan, I should never have expected that from thee, as long as I live. Why, where didst thou get thy learning? Thou hasn't studied, hast thou?"

"Oh, no!" replied Jonas, merrily. "I never found half so much in books as is lying about everywhere on the roads. From folks and the times there is more to be learned than from the greatest professor."

A deep bass voice penetrated through the branches, and the foliage of the arbour, amongst them: "Well spoken, good man!" The wedding pair and the guests looked round; but he who had spoken could not be distinguished. The great garden was full of people

walking about. They gave themselves up, therefore, to undisturbed enjoyment again ; yet, in spite of all their efforts, there was something solemn in the festivity.

A stranger entered the arbour ; a well-dressed gentleman, who apologised for the intrusion, but inquired for "the clergyman." The women looked at each other in surprise, and then smiled. Jonas seemed vexed at the visit. But Wester pointed, with a laugh, to Jonas, and said : " If there is a clergyman amongst us, this is the man ; though his cassock is as brown as his copper at home."

The stranger bowed courteously to the pretended ecclesiastic, laid a silk purse full of gold before him on the table, and said : " I am commanded to bring you a fee for a wedding-sermon just preached. Take it. I have the honour to wish you a good day." Herewith he disappeared from the arbour. Jonas sat awhile puzzling, then jumped up and pursued the unknown. He was, however, lost in the throng.

" Is the man a fool, or does he want to hang cap and bells on me ?" grumbled Master Jordan uneasily.

" Just look !" said Frau Wester, astounded, when her curiosity had led her to open the purse. " A wedding gift, as if fallen from Heaven. Good luck rains upon you through the roof. Gold piece upon gold piece ; this must come from the Prince himself."

Considering, questioning, and puzzling began, but no one could unriddle the matter. They looked curiously in front of the arbour, they mixed among the crowd, they threaded all the lanes and alleys of the extensive garden, and the park of the Prince, but to no purpose.



CHAPTER IX.

THE YOUNG MARRIED PAIR.

NOW get ready, child, to make a wedding tour with me, as the way is with fashionable folks," said the young married man next morning. "It will not, however, be a long one, nor require the whole of the rich gift of our unknown friend."

Hereupon he took Martha under his arm, and led her into his own little shop, told her the names, the uses, and the prices of all the ready-made articles, and showed her the book in which all sales were to be recorded. Thence he went with her into the workshop, and into his own little warehouse of metals of all sorts; into the woodhouse, into the yard, into the cellar, and at last into the kitchen. Here stood, shining on shelves, in regular order, earthenware, copper, and pewter plates, dishes, and cooking apparatus, for the use of the little household. On the clean hearth there was a good fire burning, kindled already by the cheerful apprentice. But Martha would allow no one to take out of her hands the preparing of their first breakfast. And Jonas declared that, in his whole life, no morning meal had afforded him more pleasure.

"To-day I shall not do a stitch in the workshop," said he, "but, like other lazy fellows, keep Saint Monday. For it is the day after our wedding, darling! Come along, we have a good deal yet to plan and to

talk about. 'Thou art now queen of the house, and I must introduce thee to thy kingdom.'

He handed over to her the cupboard keys, linen, clothing, &c. She gave each thing its proper place, and then put it away. He paid over to her, for a quarter of a year in advance, the money that he thought requisite for house-keeping, and promised to do so regularly. But, along with it, he gave her a book of twelve leaves, in which all expenses, even the most trivial, were to be noted. This he thought indispensable for understanding the state of their finances, and to enable them to see, at the end of every twelve-month, what each article of housekeeping, bread, meat, vegetables, wood, lighting, washing, clothing, furniture, &c., had cost. Such accounts he always kept himself of the receipts and outgoings in his business.

After these, and other introductory matters, their settled plan of labour began on the following morning. Rise at five o'clock, winter as well as summer; beds made, rooms cleaned, all work set straight; at six o'clock, after family-prayers, breakfast; then every one to his day's occupation; at ten o'clock, each a piece of bread for luncheon; at twelve, after a short grace, dinner; to work again; at six, a light supper; then a couple of hours' more work ended the day. Nine o'clock was bed time. Sunday alone was holiday, to be devoted to meditation and recreation solely.

This uniform, active, retired life pleased every one well. Excepting at Wester's, Martha visited nowhere, went to no parties, and thus escaped a great deal of gossip and criticism. Jonas did not imitate the other masters, in spending money out of the house every evening over cards and drink. But instead of that, he did not grudge a little expense from time to time to afford his young wife and the good-hearted apprentice some unexpected pleasure.

Although the industrious master could handle his hammer and chisel, his tongs and the die, or work at the anvil and the forge, as well as any one of the trade, his business and his profits were only small. But that did not discourage him. "‘People must live,’" said he, "‘as they can, not as they will.’ ‘He who cannot get on the mountain must keep in the dale below.’ So, Martha, if guilders seldom fall into our hands, let us husband kreutzers. Sixty of them make up a guilder."

His receipts did soon increase, for he began to trade in smaller articles. He made straps, belts, pipe-guards, net-work, bird-cages, sieves, and many things beside. Very soon he went, and his young wife went also, to the fairs in and around the principality of Altenheim, and neither of them ever came home without having made something by the excursion.

From the days of Father Thaddeus, Master Jordan understood hawking and tinkering very well. The other masters, it is true, looked down with compassion or contempt upon the poor fellow frequenting fairs, and were almost ashamed of him. He let them do as they liked, however, and thought in his own way: "‘Slow and steady wins the race;’ if a man can be but modest too. These people turning up their noses, will not make me bigger or less than I am. ‘He who would climb up a ladder, must begin at the bottom.’"

And he was right. Heaven prospered his unwearied efforts. And Heaven blessed the busy Martha too. For at the end of a year, a strange and noisy, yet welcome guest came into the household—a son, and as handsome a one as could be wished. During the first few days Jonas could hardly contain himself for joy. He danced, he wept, he laughed, he prayed, he sang. The little heathen had to be converted into a Christian, and be called Veit, in honour of Herr Wester, who, with his wife, stood sponsor at the font.

Now they went to work again with fresh courage. Their receipts had increased a little, so had the number of their town customers; but expenses had become greater too. For a trusty maid had to be called in, to help in taking care of the house and child, while the young mistress was at neighbouring markets or fairs, selling, with ready tongue, her husband's handiwork. The young wife mostly undertook this branch of the business; for experience taught that she, with her smiling face, drew more customers to the shop than the earnest man could, though the wares were one and the same; and that she always came home with richer harvest than he.

Thus from year to year their little property increased, but not on that account their expenditure. The old plan of economy continued, for full seven years more, just as in the first hour of need.

"Mother, darling mother!" cried Jonas one day, as he came in at the door with his Sunday coat on; for he had been out somewhere. She was just taking up little Veit, who was now six years old, to kiss him, for having so quickly learned the verse she had set him. "Mother! dost thou know the old corner house, in the castle-yard, not far from Gideon Kürbis's? It belongs to thee, and to that little boy, whom thou art not half fond of, after all. The house is small, it is true; below there is only a passage, a parlour, and the old clothes shop. It is large enough for us, and very convenient. I don't much like the neighbourhood of the great Master Kürbis, I confess, yet the populous castle-yard is a much more advantageous situation for our business, than this, in an empty by-street. All the good money we had lying at interest has gone to get it, and instead of being creditors, we have become debtors. I have paid only half of the purchase price. But it was cheap, and lodgers must

help us to clear off interest. Debt may perhaps spur us on faster than credit. There, now thou knowest the sunny and shady side of the matter, what dost thou think of it?"

Martha felt a joyous timidity. Although she did not conceal her anxiety about the debt, yet the thought of owning their dwelling flattered her not a little. Her eyes swimming with tears, she lay on his bosom, and said: "Do what seemest best to thee; thy will has always been mine. May the Almighty give his blessing on the new abode."

For a quiet, domestic body, like Martha, the revolution in the household, the change of place for house, kitchen, and cellar furniture, the fresh fixing of every chair and table, was a revolution in life; and, as she sat down in the evening, tired after the unusual exertions, each day seemed to her a holiday. He cleared everything out; she took everything in. He was almost better pleased with the joy his happy wife expressed at the change in their circumstances, than he was at the acquisition of a settled home. And the pleasure he took in her tasteful ordering and arrangement, added to her happiness.

The last thing to be removed, he carried himself to their new house. It was the wooden chest, in which lay preserved, in a broad gold frame, the Prince's coat of arms—his masterpiece. He had not seen it for years.

"Now, then," said he, with a curl on his lip, as he took down the costly thing from its place in the corner: "Thou hauntest me like any ghost! That is all thou art fit for! Handsome enough, I avow; it's a pity only that so much money and labour have been spent upon thee for nothing. What is the use of a golden gallows, to hang one's self on?"

As he went across the castle-yard, with his masterpiece under his arm, the rays of the evening sun dazzled him from the windows of the princely palace: "Right!" said he; "all that glitters should be together! the thing shall go there. Perhaps his old Highness will be pleased with the toy as a present, for nobody will buy it."

The more he thought of this sudden idea, and the oftener he spoke of it to Martha, the better it pleased him. "Who knows," said he, "but that, some day or other, we may need favour at Court? Right enough," added he, "one hand washes another."

The first Sunday's work in the new house was to write a respectful letter to the governor of the province. Jonas composed it, and Martha copied it out fairly, for she had learned to write better than he. It was the letter of a good burgher to a good Prince—artless and loyal. Jonas confessed in it, honourably, that the fine piece of work was only in his way, and that nothing better could be done with it than to send it as a slight token of respect and devotion, from an honest subject to a gracious Sovereign. So the present went.





CHAPTER X.

THE NEW SIGNBOARD.



FORTNIGHT after, a large document was handed over to him from the Prince's chamber. In few lines it testified that the very respectful present had been received with very gracious satisfaction, and that

his Highness had seen fit to confer on Jonas Jordan, the title of "Master Girdler to the Prince's Court," which title was to be attached to his sign.

At first the modest couple could not comprehend what use to make of this unsought title of honour. Then both burst into hearty laughter at their own embarrassment; for hitherto neither of them had thought of hanging out a signboard.

"The old gentleman is right, though," said she: "for who knows that we are living in the castle-yard now? But so, it will be known to everybody, and a signboard, with gold letters, is an ornament to the whole house."

"That may be," said he, in reply: "I almost wish, though, that the Prince had let it alone. It is nothing but nonsense, after all. But it shall be so. To great folks we dare not say, 'I'll do as I like.' We must be thankful to them for even a broken head. A piece of ribbon from them, to hang in a button-hole, repays the bravest for the loss of an arm or a leg."

The sign was made ready, and hung out. Master Jordan never regretted the cost of painting.

The possession of a house in the castle-yard, and a shop, richly furnished with glittering wares, brought the hitherto unnoticed man into repute and into credit as a man of substance. And moreover, the title of "Master Girdler to the Prince's Court!" — this excited the envy of all the masters in the trade. Their faces lengthened as often as they saw the sign; they scoffed at it, and made fun of it, one to another; they could not understand how such a poor mortal should have attained such distinction, and every one thought that the preference was due rather to himself.

Every one, however, became more affable with Jonas, and at once more social, because all thought he stood in high favour at Court. Each shook him on meeting more heartily by the hand, asked after the health of his wife and child, and reproached him for never coming into company in an evening at the guild, or never showing himself at such and such a tavern.

Herr Gideon Kürbis, too, hesitated no longer about returning the kind visit which Jonas and Martha had long since paid to the rich goldsmith.

"Eh! eh!" said he, as he looked round, on entering, "this is a very snug, comfortable place for you. I hope we shall be good neighbours, Master Jordan. It is a pleasure to me to see our children play together. My Edwin is indeed eighteen years old. Next year, *nota bene*, he goes to the university. He must study law. Something will be made of him in time. But your Veit is just a match for my little Ida. And, *nota bene*, don't let me forget to congratulate you, Herr Court Girdler, on your new dignity."

Jonas mischievously made a wry face, and said,

“What is that? A patch of silk velvet on a shabby smockfrock!”

“Hem!” resumed Herr Gideon, throwing his head a little back; “not so: honour is above everything!”

“And honesty above even honour,” replied the Court girdler.

“I say nothing about that, Master Jordan; I merely mean, that a title everywhere gives more respect, &c.”

“Everywhere, Herr Kürbis, where the binding is more regarded than the book. We must, however, give way a little to the world’s whims, if we would not feel the fool’s rod at our backs every instant.”

“You are still the same strange fellow as ever, master. Well, well; but you must alter your language now—assume another tone.”

“Look ye, Herr Kürbis; call a cock in the poultry-yard, turkey, if you will, or ostrich, even, he will still crow all the same.”

The noble Gideon, who pleased himself on all occasions with enlightening the companion of his youth, and making the superiority of his own mental endowments perceptible, shook his head in dissatisfaction, and tried to teach him something better. After a long, formal speech, “You cannot,” said he—“you cannot, for instance, go about the streets any more, with anything like respectability, in your apron, and shirt-sleeves rolled up. If his Highness should hear of it! And, you can understand for yourself, it would be very improper for the Court girdler to run about any longer, like a Jew pedlar, with his wares on a wheelbarrow, hither and thither, from one fair to another. That would be a scandal to you.”

“Scandal! nonsense!” cried Jonas. “A man must not throw away his old shoes until he has got new ones.”

“You forget,” reminded Gideon, “that titles always give a certain importance.”

“What !” said Jonas, angrily. “Everything in the world, since the days of Adam, must have a name ; but titles are only shadows of a name, and hardly that ; only shadows of a shade. Such honour is a made dish, from which a fly could not be fed. People take off their hats most to money—money is honour too.”

“That may be, if a man has it,” said Herr Gideon, pulling his shirt collar a little further forward, and letting the rings glitter on his fingers. He drew nearer, too, a little confidentially, and said, raising his brows and lowering them alternately, “A thought has just struck me. What would you think now, if, for instance, I could be made ‘Goldsmith to the Prince’s Court?’ &c. For several reasons, *nota bene*, the thing would not be disagreeable to me. Tell me, how did you manage your affairs so cleverly at Court?”

Master Jordan, who was hindered in his work by this long and silly talk, and to whom the man’s vain parade was not a little repugnant, answered briefly, “Throw a worthless wisp of straw up in the air, and you will have stubble rain back upon you. Now you know it.”

The goldsmith did not allow himself to be deterred by the strange answer of the cynic, but continued indefatigable in his inquiries. The Court girdler, on the other hand, who had not the slightest wish to make a confession to him, or to any other inquisitive person, about his household matters, answered him always in riddles, for it was part of his and Martha’s domestic policy to admit no one into their private affairs, not even into the most insignificant, that all gossip might be avoided.

Yet this was not so easy, after all ; for this very

reserve, and people having nothing to say respecting them, occasioned the most talk. A report soon spread, that Jonas was a child of fortune; that he had become too rich; that he had gained the great prize of the Frankfort lottery, bought a house and title, and had a large capital lying out at interest in foreign countries. This was the whole secret, and the man, moreover, a cunning fox, a niggardly miser, who never had enough, but who starved wife and child, and split every lucifer match a dozen times over.

When Martha heard such talk, she was often very sensitive about it. But he only laughed, and said, "Nay, darling, don't grieve! why shouldst thou? I thank the good folks that they are charitable enough to throw words at us, and not stones. And a man is like a barrel only, in some respects; give him vent, and nothing better can come from him than there is in him. Let gossips delight in gabbling, as geese do in hissing, and dogs in barking. Remedies have been discovered against cholera and pestilence, but none against evil tongues. Be satisfied, kings and emperors must be so too.

"To-day it is our turn, to-morrow we may be forgotten; and other targets will be shot at. That's the best of the joke."

Uprightly and hardily the girdler lived with his wife, just as before, active in the workshop and warehouse, at markets, and at fairs. Year after year fled, though, before the last guilder could be paid off of the debt on the house. Days of joy and sorrow succeeded each other in turn. They were received with gratitude to God—these as well as those.

Most painful to the little family was the loss of their only friends, with whom they had long lived in the closest intimacy. Frau Wester died shortly after giving birth to a daughter, and her husband pined

away from that time, consumed by grief and secret trouble. For, as was afterwards found out, the greatest part of his property had been lost, through loans or securities, which he had given inconsiderately, or too good-naturedly, to people unworthy of trust. Four years after the death of his wife, when he followed her into eternity, he left nothing behind him but debts, and an infant child. Master Jordan paid those for his friend, and Martha adopted the little girl, whose godmother she was. Herr Wester departed this life calmly, ay, joyfully, because he knew that his little Christiane was now well provided for.





CHAPTER XI.

THE HAND-WORKER'S SON.



MEANTIME, the only son of the house was growing up a handsome, hearty fellow, supple and slender, with dark brown curly hair, laughing blue eyes, and a face for which many a maiden would willingly have given her own. It seemed as if nature had chosen for him only what was fairest in the father and mother. Moreover, he was brought up simply and severely, strictly subordinate to domestic regulations. His bed by night was a sack of chaff; very light clothing was all he wore by day, winter or summer; he was hardened to wind and weather; often, as a stripling, sent without any protection, and with nothing but a piece of bread in his pocket, far over the fields to execute commissions. Falsehood was represented to him as the greatest crime; self-denial, the highest virtue. In his exterior he looked like a street-boy, yet he was never seen running about with boys in the streets. He had no playfellows of his own age but those whom his father allowed him.

The people in Altenheim called roughness tyranny. Every hand-worker, with means or without means, thought he was bringing up his children better, and for this purpose spared no hard-earned money, and did not fear even to contract debt. In early childhood, the dear little things must always appear as if

on parade ; they must keep pace with the fashions, or nearly so, not to fall behind other children in attractiveness. As soon as they were old enough to go to school, more liberty was allowed them. The little maidens had even their children's balls, soirées, music-masters, and dancing-masters. When they were fourteen years old, they had all the gestures of saloon ladies ; worked fine lace and embroidery, criticised the toilette of other damsels, tittered one among another about certain secrets of the heart, or ogled very prettily, and played little romances, as interesting as any they happened to have read.

Otherwise, and far worse, boys were dealt with. So long as they must go to school, indeed, nobody would forbid them to roam about the streets, and play all sorts of silly tricks. Every father thought then of his own youth. And if the bursch learned to curse and swear like a trooper, to smoke a cigar or a pipe "as it should be," to drink a glass of brandy with relish, the "little monkey" was only heartily laughed at. But in his fifteenth or sixteenth year he must be taken from school, whether he can read, write, or reckon properly or not. Then he must be put to business, and learn that, well or ill, as his master happens to understand it ; in the meantime, he may learn from the journey-men all sorts of rascality, and perhaps obscenity. When he becomes a journeyman himself, he goes abroad, and comes back, generally about as shrewd and well-informed as he went away.

This is mentioned here just by the way, to explain how it was that the hand-workers of Altenheim, in spite of their show and pretence, were generally but poorly off at home, and often went to ruin ; emigrated to America, sought little posts and commissions, or finally fell into the poor-house.

People might laugh and blame as much as they

liked, Master Jonas did not let them turn him from what he conceived to be right. He often thought of Father Thaddeus, and would not fall behind him, therefore he brought up his Veit, as he himself had been brought up. And the boy throve under this discipline, body and soul; industrious at school, industrious in the workshop, clever at everything he undertook, beloved by all who knew him.

After Veit had completed his sixteenth year, he was taken apprentice to the girdler's business. He was then in one of the upper classes of the Altenheimer gymnasium, and not undistinguished among his school-fellows for ability and love of learning. Jonas, who in his day had brought little wisdom with him out of the school, and who hardly knew the names mathematics, algebra, physics, chemistry, &c., was, nevertheless, not one of that common class of hand-workers who withdraw their sons from public instruction as soon as possible, and, in their stupidity, think themselves remarkably clever, when they say, "My bursch shall not study too much, but become what I am; I am no learned man; folks cannot be two things at once. A learned tradesman is, in the end, fit neither for learning nor for his business."

During the four years of his apprenticeship, Veit had to attend school as before, and during spare hours do his best in the workshop, by the side of his father. This was easy, without becoming a botcher or a bungler in his own business; for when he was first made apprentice, he understood as much already, from early familiarity with it, as almost any ordinary journeyman.

And it was no wonder. From his twelfth year he had been obliged to help his father in the workshop, out of school hours, and thus he had acquired skill and knowledge of the business; while others of his age and class, as soon as they had left the school-

master in an evening, ran about the town, got to quarrelling amongst each other, to annoying strangers, or playing off other pranks. What is more : because Veit could draw well, during the years of his apprenticeship, he often sketched for his father new patterns of wares, with figures in relief, for embossed buttons, and other ornamental work. As he possessed a more thorough knowledge of metals and their chemical relations, of different kinds of earths, acids, salts, and the varied powers and properties of nature, the apprentice could often direct the journeymen when they did not know what they were about. If they did not know how to produce any difficult form in its fitting proportions, but were trying this way and that, measuring and cutting out on paper, he, by means of a mathematical formula, could calculate it in an instant, and have done with it.

The son's cleverness proved very useful to the father on an unexpected occasion.





CHAPTER XII.

THE GREAT CONTRACT.



ONE morning a beadle from the Government Office came into Jonas's room, and ordered him to appear immediately before Privy Councillor Count van Salm. Jonas threw on his Sunday clothes forthwith, and after Martha, with womanly care, had reviewed him from head to foot, to see if her husband might appear with credit before people of so high rank, he went to the castle, a little shy, yet curious.

After the Privy Councillor had acknowledged with a half-familiar nod the oft-repeated, though somewhat uncouth bows of the newly-entered, he proceeded immediately to business, with the announcement that, as he, Master Jordan, was now Court girdler, he had been summoned, by command of his Highness, to give information on a matter connected with his own business. The contract previously existing with the manufacturing house of Florburg, for the delivery of plates for soldiers' caps, cartridge boxes, uniform buttons, horse accoutrements, mountings for pistols, muskets, swords, bayonets, &c., for the use of the provincial troops, had been for some years at an end, and the provision was now exhausted. A new contract must be made : hence arose the question.

Here the Privy Councillor stopped short, and looked Master Jordan keenly in the face.

Jonas, whose heart had been anxious before, now felt it beat high with hope and joy. But he was not a little astonished when the Count said to him : "Are you not the man—surely I cannot be mistaken—to whom, several years ago, I gave a purse of gold on his wedding-day?"

"I do not know whether it was your Excellence, or some one else," replied Jonas, "but I did receive a purse of gold while at dinner in the arbour, and afterwards, to no purpose, looked for the kind giver an hour long in the garden. It must be full twenty years since, or—No, no! my boy Veit is only just eighteen. I must say that your Excellence has a good memory."

"That cross cut on the right side of your forehead, brought you first to my recollection," said the Privy Councillor, smiling, and leaving the room just as Jonas was about to inform him how he had come by the scar, during his pedlar life, when a child.

After a while, the Count came back, accompanied by an aged and somewhat corpulent individual, whose full open face bespoke the most benevolent disposition. Jonas recognised him immediately, and bowed, almost to the earth. It was the reigning Prince who came forward. The Privy Councillor stood aside respectfully, a pace behind him.

"Ah! have I found you out at last, Mr. Parson?" said the Prince, smiling. "I heard the whole of your wedding sermon, from beginning to end, behind the bush, or the hedge, and was long after delighted with it. If you had only studied theology, I would have made you, then and there, my Court chaplain, instead of your becoming the Court girdler. But now I believe you to be a shrewd, sensible man. As to the handsome crest which you sent, if I mistake not, I am still in your debt for that. Well, never mind it now.

Perhaps we may be able to come to terms respecting the contract which you have just heard ; if so, you shall lose nothing by it. Neither must you, however, wish me to be a loser. Answer my questions, plainly and uprightly, as an honest man should."

Jonas repeated his silent reverence.

"I could get these things made abroad, you know," continued the Prince, "there would be no difficulty about that. What do you think of it?"

"Well," answered Master Jordan, "I think your Highness is pleased to jest a little. So wise a ruler as you are, most gracious Sir, would not take the money of his subjects, and send it into other countries, for things which he could obtain just as well in his own state. So good a father to his country as your Highness—I say it without flattery—will never take from his own poor children their bread, and their earnings, to throw away on foreigners."

The Prince laughed heartily at this speech, and said: "There we have it! He preaches splendidly! But, Master Parson, the question is, whether the hand-workers in this principality can furnish wares as good as those to be had elsewhere?"

"That, most gracious Sir, depends upon trial."

"Certainly, I know that our people here make solid, durable things, but generally coarse, tasteless, and often quite unsuitable. How is it that manufacturers furnish their wares, neater and cheaper, and generally understand contracting, better than the majority of our hand-workers?"

"Because, in the manufactories," replied Jonas, shrugging his shoulders, "people are engaged, who have learned more in the high schools than our folks have any opportunity of learning."

"The deuce!" cried the Prince. "But why don't you learn?"

“For a very simple reason, your Highness : either money is wanting, or other ; means moreover, our schools are bad. Ay, gracious Sir, plainly spoken, bad ! In them our sons must learn Latin and Hebrew, Greek and Chaldaic, spoken a thousand years ago ; but nothing of that which the business of life, and the social intercourse of the whole world demands of us now—neither English, nor French, nor Italian. Our boys are better acquainted with the institutions, the histories, the walls, and the fortifications of ancient Egypt and Rome, of Babylon and Mesopotamia, than with their own country ; just as if we were existing in an age a hundred years gone by, and not in the world of to-day. It may be very good for learned men, who have nothing better to do, for advocates and parsons, doctors and professors. But they are few in number ; while hand-workers, agriculturists, and industrial classes, generally, are numerous. Instead of school pedantry, they ought, for their own advantage, and for that of their fatherland, to learn more of reckoning, and measuring, of the different elements and their powers, of herbs and minerals. Yes, most gracious Sir, I have a son too. If he had not, at home, learned more for himself from books, than he did in the Latin Town School, he would be but a poor dolt !”

The Prince allowed him to talk willingly ; nodded approval now and then, or cast a significant look aside at the Privy Councillor. “The thing may be taken into consideration,” said he. “But what do you say to my confiding the contract to you entirely ? I have confidence in you !”

“I thank your Highness for it ; but I do not deserve any preference. Many of my fellow masters understand their business, assuredly no worse than I. Such partiality would appear to be Court favour, and

make me enemies. Rather nothing than hate. Folks say, that a friendly face is always the best fare."

The Prince clapped him on the shoulder, and said : "Just and true, Master Jordan. But what do you propose?"

Jonas thought a few moments in silence, and then said : "If your Highness will graciously accept it, permit me to give in an estimate of the lowest possible price for all the articles required, when account has been furnished me of the kind, quality, form, and number wanted. Afterwards, the whole contract may be offered for public competition, and the lowest tender taken, under reserve of an examination of the wares by competent judges."

"Spoken like a man of business," cried the old Prince, who, after further conversation on several other matters, dismissed the master. As soon as Jonas saw the castle door behind him, he felt as proud almost as though he had become a Prince himself. He had a great deal to recount to his wife and Veit.

A few weeks after, he received a statement of all that was to be comprised in the contract, which was then announced in the public papers, he having furnished an exact estimate of prices to be observed by those who wished to undertake the affair. Foreign competitors were, for the time being, excluded. The men at home began to bustle about amazingly. Some assembled to discuss the matter jointly; others listened about, to hear for how much this man, or that, would furnish the wares. At last they were all divided. Each one acted for himself, and sent within the appointed period his own estimate to the Treasury Office.

Martha and Jonas became very anxious towards the great day of decision, but they fell speechless into each other's arms when the beadle brought in from

the Prince a commission, by virtue of which the contract was given to the Court girdler. Martha tottered to her room. Jonas followed her. She fell on her knees in gratitude to God, praying humbly, weeping silently. He knelt beside her; tears at length flowed from his eyes, and his heart found the wonted repose.

For now help had come, and there was a prospect of being able to remove the burden of debt contracted by the purchase of the house, and of breathing more freely in the future. Business profits had indeed very much improved before, yet by no means sufficiently. When the necessary costs of trade and housekeeping had been met, the payment of interest took away the best of the remainder: then costly books had to be procured for the industrious Veit, his school fees paid, and, beyond these, two private teachers, from whom he had lessons.

In this last matter no one thought Master Jordan niggardly. "A treasure in the head and heart," he used to say, "is safer than gold stored up in iron chests."

He set instantly about the great undertaking. After the conclusion of the contract, he received from the government advances for the purchase of considerable supplies of metals, other materials, and tools. He engaged journeymen in sufficient numbers, and took, to assist him, several masters who had nothing in the town to do. Veit helped famously; he drew plans and gave instructions. Martha gave up fairs and markets, and managed correspondence and accounts. Jonas led on the whole, with a sharp eye to each and everything, and to all that was being done or neglected. This had its effects.

In less than a year and a half the whole contract had been accomplished, and to the entire satisfaction of the authorities concerned. Master Jordan, out of

debt, was now a prosperous, respected, and even envied burgher. He kept several journeymen. His customers had increased on all sides, and his wares were in the highest repute. Nevertheless, he continued the same simple-hearted, homely man he had ever been, very reserved and retiring, at work from morning until night, as though a beginner still. Other burghers near him lived like lords. He thought, on the contrary, "those who keep on level ground have not far to fall."





CHAPTER XIII.

TRUE TOKENS FOR TRAVELLING JOURNEYMEN HAND-WORKERS.



VEIT was now twenty years old, and a journeyman. He must travel for improvement. The young bursch's heart became heavy and ill at ease at the news, although he liked going about. But he had, as it were, grown up with his father and mother, and he could hardly believe he should be able to breathe apart from them. And the merry little Christiane at home, shopkeeper Wester's daughter, was as dear to him as any little sister, and a third person out of the house, whom he never named, still dearer.

He had spent almost every Sunday, especially during the past two years, in the family of Herr Kürbis, where he was always welcome. For he was a modest, agreeable young man, almost too good-looking for a journeyman girdler; at least so thought Madame Rosine, or Rosa Kürbis. Ida, her daughter, thought so too. The damsel was sixteen years old, and thus thought herself competent to judge. She was very refined and stately towards everybody, excepting towards the good-looking Veit. She would no longer be called by her Christian name, but was to be styled Mademoiselle or Fraulein. From Veit, on the contrary, she would rather hear herself called Ida, and between themselves they still used the "thou" and "thee" of

childhood. She had nothing to complain of in him, excepting his ignorance of her favourite poets, his bashfulness, and utter destitution of aught like enthusiasm for the sublime and the beautiful. To improve his taste, she read to him the most celebrated passages from her darling authors ; or to quicken his feelings, sang and played to him what she had learned upon the piano. She taught him a great deal ; more even than was good for the poor fellow's peace.

This explains why going abroad and tearing himself from all his dreams of bliss was so painful. Yet it must be so. Parting was a hard task.

On the evening before his departure, Father Jonas embraced him once more, clasped him firmly to his bosom, and said : " Listen, Veit ! thou art a good bursch. Be true to thyself, thy parents, and thy Maker, then will all be well ! I will give thee, however, a little good counsel on the way. Sit down beside me, and hear me."

Veit took a seat. By his side sat the deeply-moved mother, holding his hand fast in hers ; before him was the father, who now spoke thus :

" ' Labour stands on golden feet,' says the proverb, but not every one knows how to plant them. Do thou learn ! Many of our handicraftsmen at home have no desire or inducement, nor any taste to improve in business. Therefore we must go abroad to look and learn.

" To travel with advantage, thou must see nothing on the road without finding out the why and the wherefore of it. He who travels otherwise, has gone through the world as if in sleep ; has seen green trees, painted houses, and two-legged men, that are to be seen at home ! I have known handicraft journeymen, who knew nothing more about great towns than just

their curiosities—the cathedral at Strasburg, and the long-tongued figure at Basle.

“As a man’s disposition may often be inferred from the features of his face, so are the features of every town and country significant. These are the true characteristics for every handicraftsman to observe; they enable him to judge of what he has to expect.

“If thou findest in a town many public-houses, wine, beer, or brandy shops, depend upon it the journeymen are jolly fellows; but on pay-day there are sad faces, and seldom peace at home.

“If thou comest to a town where heaps of refuse lie in the streets, don’t much expect to find work from the masters there. The burghers there are only respectable peasants in periwigs.

“When the bells are ringing too often, and saints’ days and holidays have no end, provide thyself with small change: thou wilt need it for beggars.

“If pompous carriages roll along the roads by day, but there are no lanterns in the streets at night, the town is like a would-be-fine lady, that under a silk robe hides a torn petticoat.

“Where the old folks work at home, while the young gentlemen on a week day make pleasure-parties with the burghers’ daughters, thou mayst predict bankruptcies.

“Because there are many churches, and tall steeples in a place, do not expect much, or very remarkable piety there as a necessary consequence; nor from the rich clothing of the folks expect to find people of property amongst them; nor from many insignia of merit, think that the wearers are therefore worthy men. Such and similar things are signboards, which are by no means confined to public-houses.

“Where proud monuments meet thee, ‘to the honour’ of this person or that, do not believe that

they are to commemorate the departed : they tell rather of the vanity of those who erected them.

“ If thou dost not find the peasant at work in his fields by sunrise, be assured that many sit long after sunset in the evening over their beer and brandy.

“ If the country folks are coarse and uncourteous, the ox in the stall has given better instruction than the public teacher ; if they cringe, however, but sneer maliciously behind thy back, be sure there is an evil spirit in the place—some tyrannical village emperor.

“ It will not be necessary for thee to go round the walls of a town, nor to climb up the steeple, to see how large it is. It is certainly small, if the folks have many greetings when they meet, and their hat-brims are worn. If the grass grows in the street, go thy way. It will be difficult to get work from any master there, for trade is still.

“ Where there are no laws, thou art unprotected ; rely, in case of need, on thine own right-hand. Where there are too many laws, and at every step thou stumblest on a ‘ proclamation,’ take thy departure early. Lawyers and policemen are looking out for thee at all corners.

“ If thou comest into a country where every little town has not its own gallows, but, on the contrary, its own school-houses and its poor-house ; where every village has not broad common lands, but good fat fields ; where the road-sides are not beset with beggars, but planted with fruit trees ; where lawyers, doctors, and publicans, complain of hard times—there, Veit, my boy, take thy rest : the people have their heads and hearts in the right place.

“ If between splendid palaces thou seest houses crumbling with age, the windows broken or blocked up, and many tumble-down huts—there cross thyself, and pass on.

“I have now said enough: not that I have told thee all. But thou knowest now, or nearly, what I mean by the ‘true tokens’ in a place.

“Take my counsel. Wherever thou comest, ask much, but answer little. Feign to be more ignorant than thou art, and folks will willingly instruct thee.

“Praise all that is praiseworthy, but do not blame all that is blamable; so thou wilt win all hearts, if that is of any consequence to thee.

“Throughout the journey be pious, industrious, frugal; modest, desirous of knowing, reserved; ready to oblige, persevering, and of good courage. So wilt thou one day return to thy parents a thorough man, upright, skilful, valuable, both in deed and in deliberation.”

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CHAPTER XIV.

THE SENSIBLE JOURNEYMAN TRAVELLING.



VEIT arose at the earliest dawn of the following day, threw his knapsack over his shoulders, and left his father's house. The moon still shone among a few stars. Father, mother, and Christiane were yet sleeping. He did not want to renew the pain of taking leave. And there was another farewell before him, of which no one was to know anything. Ida had demanded it. Perhaps Jonas, among other good lessons on the way, might have warned his son, in intercourse with persons of the other sex, to preserve calmness and discretion, not to suffer incipient liking to grow into decided inclination, nor inclination to burst into blinding passion. Perhaps, however, after due consideration, he omitted the warning, lest he should create danger where none existed as yet; or perhaps he estimated his son's good sense by his own. As he suspected nothing, so he remained silent. Even Martha's suspicions had not been excited, though women's eyes are usually very sharp on such occasions.

Where the gardens of the goldsmith and the girdler met, behind their houses, stood the youthful Ida awaiting her lover. As if winged, Veit flew over the hedge, and she received him with warmth. For a long time, each could only sigh the other's name; weeping, each

whispered: "Forget me not." Pledges followed, and vows of eternal fidelity. To the good-hearted Veit at this moment, it seemed easier to give up father and mother, and lose everything in the world, rather than this single being, without whom the universe was a dead nothing.

Ida tore herself away from him first. Sad and distracted, he staggered through the empty streets towards the gate of the city. Then, in the open plain, he wept away his sorrow, and resolved, after the shortest possible residence abroad, to hasten home and be for ever united to his beloved.

The tears exhausted themselves at last. As the landscape lighted up all around him in the rays of the sun, his heart became calmer and more composed. Distractions on the way, thoughts of the future, the incidents and adventures that might possibly befall him on the journey, as imagination depicted them, engrossed him more and more. He looked more quietly on the past. Separated now for a long time from the guardian angels of his existence—his parents—both became dearer to him than before. Ida, it is true, stood as yet on the same level with them. But when he thought at times of his return home some day, and what might have happened there, whom he might miss, then a voice was heard within: "You, my beloved parents, you alone I would not lose." Even Ida's image retreated. And a few days afterwards, when he remembered their parting in the garden, and the trouble he was then in, he became almost vexed with himself. He thought an evil spirit had taken possession of him—that he had an attack of delirium.

He wrote home from time to time, giving all particulars of his journey, and also whenever he changed his abode. For his parents wished to be kept con-

tinually informed as to where he was, that they might assist him in case of need.

Master Jordan had furnished him with a sufficient supply of money for all expenses, and the careful mother had done more, probably. As far as he could, he remained no longer in the towns than was necessary for becoming acquainted with what was most remarkable in them. But in Nuremberg, and then in Munich, he spent more than a full year. After this, he went to England, and obtained work immediately in a large manufactory in London.

Nothing astonished Father Jonas so much in Veit's accounts, as that the roving journeyman could change his trade in almost every town; was at one time engaged with a brass founder, then with a girdler, then again with a brazier. "With this Jack-of-all-trades' life, may the bursch not turn out a bungler in the end?" cried he at times. "Nine sorts of trades make only nine beggars! Better, say I, for the cobbler to stick to his last. Where did the boy get all these notions? He did not learn them from me, I am sure."

Veit, however, was not one of the common order of workmen, who travel only for travelling's sake, and to keep Saint Monday; who spend all their week's earnings in card-playing, wine and beer drinking, and after that, go fighting from house to house; who see a great deal, but understand nothing. He, accustomed to few wants, left no town without having earned enough to pay his expenses, and save a little beside; had no holiday, without spending it over some instructive book, or in the inspection of foundries, cabinets of art, or the model rooms of polytechnic institutions. And where he saw anything of which he did not understand the origin and the use, he ventured to ask modestly. Then he took a note of it in his journal. As he showed in his questions an amount of

knowledge seldom possessed by journeymen, people conversed with him willingly, and satisfied his curiosity. Thus he often came into contact with experienced men, and even with celebrated men, who were of great use to him. The other journeymen ridiculed and satirised brother Altheimer, the learned girdler, as they called him. He let them laugh and ridicule; remained civil and obliging to them, yet knew how to keep the worst of them at a respectful distance.

“I am convinced more and more, daily,” he wrote once to his father, “that this travelling for improvement enjoined by our guilds is to very few of our journeymen of great advantage, while to many it is highly pernicious.

“How should these men, most of them badly brought up, attain to any greater perfection in their business, if they have left home and school without any preparation for it? No one can understand, if his understanding has not been developed. From one publican they go to another, and from one workshop to another; everywhere they find the old common track, the mechanical, mindless life of labour, just as in the very first place to which they were sent to learn their trade. At most, they acquire dexterity by practice. Now and then they learn a trick from a master, or get a receipt, which has been cautiously kept secret. When possessed of this, they think something of themselves.

“Even the character of these ramblers is not seldom destroyed by intercourse with their fellows. They learn drinking and rioting, gambling and licentiousness, caballing and debating. If evil consequences ensue, they take to flight, laugh at the police, and leave poor maidens in the lurch. Let them act as honestly as they know how, yet many come home worse than they went away. Many are ruined before

they return to their native place. Believe me, dearest father, the time of travel is to very few a true school for life; one in which, through frequent change of good and evil days, the head acquires experience, the thoughts strength and clearness, the heart courage, and reliance on God. Very few, even of those who bring a scientific education with them, can gain much of value for their calling in life; extend their views, transfer and apply to their own line of business the inventions and discoveries that have been made in other departments of art and industry."

It seems that Veit, indeed, understood thoroughly this transferring and applying. Jonas probably did not quite understand the meaning of these remarkable words, because he had been badly schooled in his youth, and knew little of the new inventions and discoveries in other departments, else he would hardly have exclaimed: "Where has the boy got these notions? He did not learn them from me." He would not have been so much surprised that his son quickly found employment in a large hardware manufactory and foundry in London, and received, on the score of his usefulness, a very liberal salary too. And if he had doubted the fact, he would have been convinced of it by a letter which he received a year and a half later, from Paris, containing an English bank-note for £200 (about 2,400 florins) that Veit had enclosed.

"I confess," said he, "that I left London, and my former master, Sir Francis Dalton, very unwillingly. He urged me, however, so earnestly to accept the situation in the foundry at Paris, belonging to his friend, M. Bellarme, who is in a great deal of trouble, that I yielded at last.

"M. Bellarme and his amiable wife received me very kindly. He is a man of large property, at the same time proprietor of an extensive foundry for bells,

bronze statues, and articles of luxury ; he has a splendid shop, too, in Paris, but is unwell. I believe he is consumptive.

“ His late partner has left the firm, and the management of the whole affair now devolves upon him alone. In full reliance on the recommendation of Sir Francis, he has transferred it to me. He seemed at first somewhat distrustful on account of my youth ; nor was the task by any means easy. But I did not lose courage, and my salary is much larger now than it was in London, while all the necessaries of life are cheaper here than there.

“ At my departure, Sir Francis presented me with a costly gold repeater, and his lady gave me a ring, set with brilliants. I sold the jewels, for the wearing of such finery does not become me ; the watch, too, I converted into money, for I like none better than that which you, my dearest parents, once laid under the lighted tree for me on Christmas-Eve. The produce of these and other presents, added to my savings in London, I forward you herewith. Apply this small token of my gratitude to your own use, as may best please you.”

Master Jordan shook his head at this passage, and cried out, deeply moved, yet as though vexed, while a tear of motherly tenderness stole down Martha's cheek—“ No ! no ! by no means ! What is the fool thinking of ? He'll want the money himself, a simpleton. Let him wait till he comes to the masterpiece. What pleases me most in the story is his contentment and his humility. He is not ashamed of his old silver watch yet. It is not everybody that could act so. There must be strong legs to support such extraordinary good luck. These the bursch has.”



CHAPTER XV.

THE BIRTHDAY.

BUT Master Jonas had them too. Although his prosperity visibly increased ; although he had work enough, for the town and elsewhere, for the Court, and for the troops of the Prince, and from year's end to year's end kept five journeymen ; although the members of his "trade" had honoured him with the title of "Master of the Guild," yet he changed nothing in the former frugal, nay, almost miserable, household economy and mode of life. Very simple, wholesome, well-cooked food ; clothing that was decent, but by no means costly, or made for ornament ; thorough cleanliness in all the rooms, and amongst all the utensils ; would have made people believe, almost, that he was a rigid Herrnhuter in his family. Many burghers, much less wealthy, but whose housekeeping was much more expensive—even many of his journeymen, accused him continually of avarice. But they wronged him. Among necessitous families, his helping hand was not unknown ; and if voluntary contributions were collected for concerns of public utility, or for valuable institutions in the land, the Court girdler was seen to be more liberal than many of the rich gentlefolks who drove their carriages.

He was accustomed to make an exception to this frugality, but once a year. That was on his own, or

on Martha's, Veit's, or Christiane's birthday. Then all work must be laid aside; then neither wine nor good joints were wanting at table; then there was a present to gladden every member of the household, and amusements of all sorts were kept up until evening.

His fifty-second birthday happened on a Sunday, but began with a great fright for him. He had gone into a workshop before breakfast, to clear away a little here and there. He was singing to himself aloud, as he did every day, a morning hymn—

“Wake up my soul,” &c.

Suddenly, a piercing cry from the little dwelling-room interrupted him. It was the voice of his Martha. He started, and trembled in every joint; some misfortune seemed pending. He threw aside what he had been carrying in his hand, and was hastening out to bring assistance, when little Christiane, with pale face, rushed in at the door.

“What is the matter?” exclaimed he; “what has happened?”

“Come, come!” cried the affrighted Christiane; “There is a strange man burst into the house, and mother—— In the parlour!”

He would hear nothing, but ran to the parlour, and stood astounded and silent at the open door; for a tall young man, in a great coat, exceedingly well-dressed, with all the ardour of the warmest lover, was holding the weeping Martha in his arms, and covering her with kisses.

“What! what!” shouted Jonas. “Thou scamp, thou vagabond, how durst thou frighten me so?” Then he fell on the neck of the stranger, whom Martha still clung to and embraced. Christiane stood in a corner, and seeing everybody cry, without com-

prehending what it was about, sobbed and cried louder than all.

“For shame, maiden, why cry? Dost thou not know him?” said Father Jordan, with joyous face, as he wiped his eyes, and took the timid maiden by the arm. “It is Veit. It is thy brother. Hither, thou simpleton, hither, and kiss him!”

The tumult of the first surprise and confusion, in which all talked together without hearing each other, in which answers were interrupted by questions, and questions by embraces, was not so soon at an end. It was not until they were at length seated to breakfast around the deal table, and could see each other more clearly, that a moment's silence arose, for agreeable astonishment and surprise. Veit saw with satisfaction that five years had deprived his father of none of his elasticity or vigour, nor whitened a single hair; and that his mother, though in her fortieth year, was still as fresh, as fair, and as active as a woman of thirty. Christiane alone, with her fourteen years, her flaxen hair and blue eyes, seemed to have grown the fast, and too handsome. On the other hand, too rest were surprised at Veit's manly beauty and strength, at his luxuriant growth, at his noble bearing, visible in every gesture and movement; at the thought and spirit that gleamed in his eyes.

“Hark ye! bursch,” exclaimed Jonas, who regarded him with fatherly delight; “thou seemst to me almost too learned, too refined, and too elegant for Veit Jordan. What turner has cut so neat a piece of furniture out of so rough a piece of timber?”

Now Veit had to relate the whole day long every particular of his journeys, acquaintances, masters, and work; what he had met with, good and evil; what he had learned and seen of note in foreign countries. To one piece of intelligence only they could not re-

concile themselves, and it cast a dark shade over all the others, namely, that various and important affairs would not allow him to remain longer than a few weeks in the house of his parents. M. and Madame Bellarme had been loth, almost afraid, to let him go. The feeble state of health of the former began to be so serious, that he durst not engage in the bulk of his affairs. In the space of a year, both felt such confidence in Veit's knowledge of business, and in his honour, that they had taken him as a partner in trade, and in the foundry. Henceforth, M. Bellarme contributed his capital only; Veit his knowledge, care, and industry.

"Well, bursch," cried Father Jordan, joyfully, and shaking the speaker's hand heartily, "that will almost comfort me. Of thee can no man say, that thou hast more luck than wit. Come, I must kiss thee once more. Thou hast given me a birthday indeed; a better I have not kept in all my life."

Veit, too, heard from his family every event, great and small, that had transpired at home, in the town, and at the Court, during his absence. But what he would most gladly have heard something of, he hardly ventured to ask about, and when he asked, it was only too superficially. Several times during the day he went across to the window; often he looked out. He was so near to Ida. Not a hundred leagues, but only a partition wall of the building separated him from her; yet he saw the beloved form nowhere.





CHAPTER XVI.

THE KURBIS FAMILY.



NOT until evening, while Martha and Christiane had their hands full of work on the outside, could Veit find opportunity for drawing his father a little further into detail respecting the inhabitants of the neighbouring house. He was afraid the rich and beautiful Ida might have become, in the meantime, the conquest of another. Her memory had remained unobliterated in his heart; and perhaps this remembrance of her had contributed, not a little, to his indefatigable exertions after perfection in his business, in order to raise himself to such a height of prosperity, that he might one day be able to offer the rich heiress his hand; or to escape from temptations which easily ensnare a youth of agreeable exterior, in the first glow of feeling. Perhaps there is, for a young man of good education, no better guardian angel—next to the remembrance of father and mother—than the first love for one in whose sanctity he may be himself sanctified.

“Why dost thou then inquire so much about the Kürbis folks?” said Father Jonas. “Things keep with them pretty much as they were of old. That Frau Rosine was buried with great pomp, I wrote to thee two years ago, in London. It is said that she undermined her constitution with eating macaroni,

tarts, bonbons, and other dainties. Pastry-cooks and confectioners had to send her a basketful of trash every day. But she was old, between sixty and seventy ; at least ten years older than her husband. That is turning the world upside down. Old folks and young should not be brought together in that way. Mind this, Veit. The bride thou bringest me, as a daughter-in-law, must be at least ten years younger than thou."

Veit smiled, and in silence made a rapid calculation concerning his five-and-twenty and Ida's twenty years.

"As to Gideon Kürbis," continued the speaker, "he still fares sumptuously every day, like the rich man in the parable, in spite of many a mishap. A mishap is not indeed a misfortune, but it should sharpen men's wits. He must have been cheated or robbed of considerable sums by shopmen, clerks, or commissioners ; because the dolt, to keep his bacon, sets the cat to watch it. Beside open cash-boxes, the best men may become knaves. Yet the simpleton ought not, on that account, to have left his business, or given up watch-making. I dissuaded him from it. But what was the use ? He thinks he is a man with the wisdom of Solomon in his pocket. With all my heart ! Every fool is pleased with the cap that fits him."

"But things are not so very bad with him, are they ?" interrupted Veit.

"I do not know," was the reply. "The rope-maker thrives best when he goes backwards fastest ; not so, however, the goldsmith and the capitalist. It is said, too, that the young gentleman, his son, the notary, occasions Papa no small outlay and expense."

"Where does Edwin live ?"

"At Oldenstadt still, as a notary, with a great place of business. He is now on a visit here."

“Then I shall see him to-morrow?”

“And thou wilt see nothing better in him, Veit, than everybody has; than I myself have, when he visited us lately. He is one of those ordinary fellows, who may be met with by the dozen now-a-days in the streets, in fashionable coats, and with fashionable beards; a noodle that knows nothing, and will learn nothing, but just his own beautiful self; a fellow that takes no interest in anything; has no opinion of his own, but sails with every wind; talks sense and non-sense in a breath; is careless of right and wrong; never looks at the truth, even if it stares him full in the face; a creature indifferent to good or evil, honour or shame; one who wears a waxed cloak, and lets all run down it that comes upon it. In a word, he is not worth a button, not a farthing: he’s a cipher, that would nevertheless cut a figure.”

“Then his father has not much pleasure with him?”

“But so much the more has the son with the father, whose cash-box is his gold mine. I believe that Edwin has appeared here, only because his creditors are biting him again worse than fleas do a dog.”

“Is he married?”

“Oh no! He goes about marrying everywhere, where no light comes. No woman is too wicked for him; nor any man good enough for his sister, Ida.”

“Perhaps,” thought Veit to himself, “perhaps she is waiting for me.” He passed his hand over his face, and said: “She will have no lack of suitors.”

“No, there is no lack of them. An honest, household education the poor thing never had. She was sent to a French establishment for young ladies, that she might learn to parley, trill, and coquet. Why, the house adjoining has been beset like a bee-hive, this long time. She won’t remain unmarried. Poor farmers’ calves and rich men’s daughters don’t grow old.

And, after all, in the end, doubloons are as good as beauty spots. As for the rest, Miss Ida is a handsome lass: it is a pity only that she knows it. She is barely twenty years old; it is a pity, too, that she cannot keep there."

This was not the most agreeable news that Veit had to hear. Still he knew his father's aversion to the neighbours. One thing only comforted him. He learned that, in passing, Ida had, from time to time, inquired after him. Thus he was by no means forgotten by her. Next day he did not neglect to announce himself to the neighbour's family, and pay his visit.

On entering the elegant room of Herr Kürbis, he found the gentleman busy, huddling together a number of papers which were lying on the table, and hastily hiding them in a drawer of the polished mahogany secretaire. Veit saw plainly that they were lottery lists, and coloured tickets of lotteries of various kinds. The notary, Edwin, went whistling up and down with careless mien; he checked himself, however, suddenly, and received the visitor with uncommon friendliness, and half-a-dozen questions, to none of which he appeared to expect an answer.

"Eh! eh!" cried Herr Kürbis, as he moved from the table to Veit, with a swinging gait. "Welcome, Mr. Jordan! Returned safe from your travels, eh? Ay, ay, so goes the world. But you have grown tall, strong, and manly, &c. There is no mistake about that. Yes! yes! and *nota bene*, you have seen much, and got a good deal of experience in the last four, five, or six years?"

Before Veit could answer a word, the notary interrupted his father with the remark: "You have uncommon fine curly hair, dear Jordan! Why do you not let beard and whiskers grow? They would become your face well."

Having said this, he turned on his heel, went to the window, humming an opera air, and examined what was going forward in the castle-yard.

The conversation, during which the girdler's son seemed ill at ease, continued in this strain for a considerable time. He observed the rules of common politeness, however, although he suspected that he had come, either at a wrong hour, or that, as a journeyman handicraftsman, he was out of place in this fine house. Ida was gone, in company with a few female friends, and a Polish Count, Garinsky, to spend some weeks on the estate of a muslin manufacturer.

For poor Veit, nothing could be more joyless. With the hope of making himself a little more interesting to the father and brother, he told them of his present position in France, at the head of one of the largest commercial houses. Both hearers were profuse in congratulation, and expressions of astonishment. Herr Kürbis said "*nota bene*" many times, and his son played, at intervals, with a kitten on the sofa.

At last, pretty much out of humour, Veit left these gentlemen. He sought, and soon found peace again, in the midst of his family. Here the cordiality of his father, the tenderness of his mother, the sisterly attachment of Christiane, made amends for everything but Ida's absence. He began to fear that he should not be able to see her during his short stay; or, what was worse, that he had lost her for ever. For among her admirers, and the most favoured, too, was the Polish Count, a handsome man, and owner of large property, it was said, in the Duchy of Warsaw.

Three weeks after, the long and ardently expected one returned; and Veit, who had never neglected to pay his court to the goldsmith, though it had cost him great effort to do so, was invited, as an old acquaintance, to an evening party. He went with sorrowful

heart. In a richly decorated hall, he found a brilliant assemblage of gentlemen and ladies, old and young. And Ida came out of the middle of them to meet him, more beautiful than he had ever seen her in his sweetest dreams. Both bowed in silence, each gazing at the other with admiration. A charming glow overspread Ida's face; her eyes flashed strangely, as if with secret transport. Before he had collected himself, she laughed, and said: "*Mon Dieu!* Herr Jordan, I should hardly have known you again. *C'est admirable!* Allow me to introduce you to the company. A neighbour, ladies and gentlemen, an old play-fellow, now superintendent of a large foundry in Paris!"

The good Veit felt, at these words, as if he had fallen from a hot steam bath at once into ice-cold water. He did violence to his feelings, however, conversed with one person and another, while Ida fluttered about on tiptoe, toying and jesting. Occasionally she cast a glance on the handsome companion of her youth, or now and then exchanged a few hasty words with him, but never alone. She seemed to seek and to avoid him. While the elderly ladies and gentlemen sat down to hazard, the younger ones assembled round the piano, where she sang, accompanied on the flute by Count Garinsky, a man of insinuating address and high polish.

The evening passed away very tediously for young Jordan, and as this had done, so did several others. For although Ida was very amiable, he never found her, or spoke to her, alone. She conducted herself towards him, as towards everybody else, without making any distinction. At first he thought this conduct on the part of the maiden only strange—a sort of disguise. But soon it made him low-spirited; then it roused his pride: at last, instead of being displeased, his passion only cooled.

Yet, as the time drew near in which he was to leave Altenheim again, he put the question to her—as they sat together, by accident, when tired of dancing at a ball—whether he should have no opportunity of speaking to her in private before his return to France. She seemed a little startled when she heard of his speedy departure, but whispered to him at once pleasantly: “Visit me to-morrow morning before eight o’clock; the maid will show you up.”

He appeared at the appointed hour. She was alone, and in her light white morning dress, seemed more lovely than in all the ornaments of the toilette. Now he told her, with a fresh glow of passion, of the earlier, happy days of their love; of their vows; of the pain of that moment of separation in the garden. “And may I,” added he, taking her hand, “may I venture now, as then, to call thee my *Ida*?”

Blushing a little with embarrassment, she looked at him, and said, smiling: “Between our two selves, *mon cher*, why not? But, Veit, before others’ ears it will not do. We are no longer children. Thou hast, however, Veit, become in the mean time *un bon garçon*; how is thy heart?”

“As ever,” answered he, laying his hand on his breast, “firmly and truly thine.”

She laughed incredulously, and replied “*Mon Dieu!* How honourable he looks! Away with thee, away! I do not believe thee, thou rogue!”

He looked at her, fearful and in doubt, and whispered, “*Ida*, speak plainly. Am I dear to thee as ever?”

“*Voilà!*” exclaimed she, laughing and ashamed. “There is a conscientious question, and put in plain German. But the young gentleman knows one cannot be angry with him.”

“*Ida*, dear *Ida*,” continued he, in the same tone,

but yet more earnestly, "be candid; is thy heart free?"

"Free as a bird, *si vous voulez*," replied she, laughing again at her own jest. "And what further, my young Adonis?"

"But Ida, dear Ida, may I from thy father ask thy hand at the altar?"

She interrupted him suddenly, and laid her hand upon his lips. "Be still, still, and no child. Count Garinsky is jealous enough without. Thou knowest my position. Our betrothal—I mean Garinsky's with me—cannot yet be made public. He awaits the consent of his somewhat haughty parents in Poland. Thou seest, I cannot retreat, my fine fellow."

"Thou and Count Garinsky!" faltered Veit, with trembling lips. "Thus our vows broken! Thou hast broken a heart, maiden!"

"No, no," whispered she in his ear. "We may remain as we were. Where is the harm then of my loving thee still? Why art thou so angry? The marriage with Garinsky is, on my side, only one of convenience."

"Abominable!" cried he, his eye flashing fire, and tearing his hand from hers, as if smitten with disgust. "Deceive me! then deceive him! God forgive thee! but I despise thee!" He turned his back on her, and hastened away, slamming the door behind him.



CHAPTER XVII.

THE CHANGE OF FORTUNE.

HE ran about the whole morning in the Prince's park, and outside the gates, to compose himself. Such a transformation of the once pure and innocent, even if vain and extravagant creature, he would have considered impossible. The same beautiful Ida, more beautiful now than before, whom he five years ago had honoured as a saint, and loved, had appeared to him again as a fallen angel—frivolous, unprincipled, proud, and coquettish; capable of baseness, even. To stay in his native town had now become unbearable. It was a comfort to him, in his anguish, that he had but a few days to remain, however painful might be a fresh separation from home.

He refused to pay the Kürbis family a farewell visit, when Mother Martha reminded him of the duties of courtesy. "No!" said he; "forgive me that, dearest mother; I have seen and experienced too much of the baseness and wickedness of those people. Let Herr Kürbis, a haughty fool, waste his property in pomp and idle entertainments; that is the least part of the evil he will one day have to repent of. His children are, I believe, baser and more corrupted than he can ever have been. They are," continued he, with increasing violence, "thoroughly corrupted people. They are offensive to me, so deep is their degradation."

Martha tried, with her own good-heartedness, to

appease his violence, and to soften his hard judgment. "Besides, dear Veit," said she, at the close of her admonition, "most of the handicraftsmen of Altenheim are not a whit better. If they have not property, like our neighbour, still, with the greatest carelessness, they carry on housekeeping on a scale wholly disproportioned to their means; few of them, thinking at all of the future, save anything from their earnings. They earn money for comedies, concerts, public-houses, and feasting. Their sons, coddled and spoiled while little children, are suffered to grow up afterwards half wild and neglected; no one troubles himself about their vicious practices and bad habits. Hence arise, in course of time, idlers, soldiers, poor authors, emigrants, vagrants, and even criminals. Ah! not these poor wretches, but their parents, deserve to be punished. And what shall I say of Ida, and many of our burghers' daughters? Look at them on Sundays, and see them strutting about, decorated after the newest fashions. They suffer themselves to be led to the theatre, or to the ball-room, where they waltz and revel until long after midnight, without any motherly oversight.

"The mother and maid must work at home, but the young lady-daughter dare not soil her hands: she sits sewing or knitting in her room, and just looking over her stitches at a book she has got from the lending library. How can it be otherwise, than that our burgher households should decay, while strangers who settle amongst us with their trades, and who are more economical and sensible, rise to eminence?"

"That's it!" echoed Father Jonas; "that is just what I would have said of Goldsmith Gideon. The old saying is a true one—'Like father, like son; like mother, like daughter.' Things of a sort seldom go apart. An apple does not fall far from the stem. Ay, Veit, thou are right, sooner or later our neigh-

bour will repent. He who brings up his children badly forges a collar for his own neck. Edwin and Ida are now grown up over his head, and they lead him by the girdle, because he did not lead them. The tree must be bent while it is still young. I have it from trusty authority, that Mr. Notary Edwin is treading a dangerous path, and if he cannot refund certain sums of money that have been entrusted to him, is in danger of finding board and lodging free, in a prison. Now Ma'amselle Ida has, fortunately, fished up the Polish Count with her angling rod, he, naturally enough, will have to help them out of their difficulty. I am glad of it with all my heart, if it will do them any good. But the poor simpleton, Gideon, should have learned a little earlier the old adage, 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.' Most likely the deceased Frau Kürbis did not find that in any of her love tales or romances."

Veit would not be persuaded to see his former beloved one again. She seemed to him like a devil, disguised in the form of an angel. Her perfidy, her hypocrisy, with which she deceived and wantonly betrayed every one about her, would have made the whole of womankind contemptible to him, had not the unalterable purity of soul of his excellent mother, and the childlike piety of Christiane, who grew up an exact counterpart of Martha, reminded him that there were exceptions, and that a clean corn-field must not be compared to a desert, on account of a few weeds between the stalks.

A few days afterwards, he broke from the arms of his friends, and promised to appear at home once a year, at least. But, as many things which we resolve on in the world—certain of our own firm will, but not of the future—remain mere resolutions, and unfulfilled promises, so it was in this case.

When Veit undertook the journey to Altenheim, M. Bellarme had so far recovered his health that a complete cure could hardly be doubted of. And while Veit had been at home with his family, no week had gone by without accounts by letter from Madame Bellarme. She tranquillised him, and complained of nothing but his absence, which she and her husband felt the more, daily, in their country solitude.

But on his return, he found the beautiful villa in the neighbourhood of the foundry empty. M. Bellarme, with his youthful spouse, had gone the day before to Paris, to be nearer to some celebrated physicians there. But here the sick man's state of health declined. Only through the skill of the medical men was his life feebly prolonged for fourteen months. Then he died.

Veit's activity, already taken too much into requisition, through the exclusive management of the works in the foundry, the shop at Paris, correspondence, &c., was now pushed to an extreme by M. Bellarme's death. For now came relatives and legal advisers of the young widow; and the money, the books, the connections, the stock of raw material, and the ready-made ware, all had to be narrowly examined; and although everything was found at last to be in perfect order, so that Veit received well-merited praise and confidence, yet his own health suffered from it a little.

After all this trouble and excitement, he would gladly have recruited himself by an excursion to Altenheim. But setting aside the consideration of his own interest in the management of the extensive concern, and setting aside the responsibility for the widow's share of the business, he soon saw himself bound by ties of gratitude to forget himself and his own wishes. For M. Bellarme, in his last testament, had left him a legacy of 5,000 francs, with the request

and the stipulation that he should not alone give effectual support to the bereaved widow, but that he should not withdraw from her and the whole affair without her free and explicit consent. Veit thought he should hardly find a more advantageous position for the future than the one offered him here. He gave his assent, both verbally and on paper, to the wishes of the deceased, and then sent this considerable sum of money, as he had done his former savings, to his parents.

Very shortly after this, he received from Father Jonas a letter, the unexpected contents of which shocked him a good deal.

“What I have long feared must come”—began the letter—“has come. It is all over with poor Gideon. Everything is in ruins. The whole town is full of the sad tale. Thy mother and I have not yet recovered from the first fright, though it is a week since. I will tell thee the story, though, in regular order. A misfortune, dear Veit, comes seldom alone. Many good households have been drawn into destruction along with him. When a proud tower tumbles, it strikes many a humble roof. A stone has hit me on the shin, too.

“First of all, it may be four weeks ago, news came from Oldenstadt that the notary Edwin had fled by night. I guessed, when thou wert in Altenheim last year, that he had come only to obtain help from his father. However merrily the bird may sing, one can tell when it is moulting. Old Kürbis suffered himself to be deluded with the fair words and fine promises of his gentlemanly son, and advanced considerable sums to support his honour. That lasted a year, then it was all gone, and strangers' money too. Gideon could give no more. Edwin had deceived many people. He took to his heels. Nobody knows where he has gone to. Some say to America.

“Although old Kürbis was ripe to rottenness, he would not allow it to be so. He continued his airs and pretences up to the last hour, to preserve his credit. Probably he hoped for the great prize in the lottery, like many a fool who pawns his last shirt to win a million by it. He had a multitude of blanks from all sides, and only very small prizes with them. Where one becomes rich by gambling, ten are made poor. He, however, would not give up gambling. That hastened his ruin. A man may pay his court to fortune, but he should not try to seduce her.

“The disappearance of the notary, who was pursued with warrants for apprehension, excited suspicion as to the solidity of the father. The creditors pressed him, and were not to be pacified with fine words. At length I went to him also, and said: ‘Where is my loan?’ Next day, he declared himself bankrupt.

“On the same day, the noble gentleman Count Garinsky had disappeared with Ma’amselle Ida. No one knew why or whither. Probably they had suspected something wrong, and had no inclination to save the shipwrecked Gideon at the expense of their own property. Enough, they are gone to Poland beyond a doubt, and they will lead a merry life there, while their father’s despondent curses follow at their heels. Never could I have thought Ida capable of such conduct.

“As to our eight thousand guilders, that lie on security of Gideon’s house, do not be afraid for them. In every case they have the advantage of the first mortgage. Still it grieves me that I deposited the hard-earned money of both of us there, suffering myself to be blinded by five per cent. Everything is under seal yet. Next week will begin the public auction of all the floating and fixed property of the bankrupt. It is said that there will be something left to keep him from beggary or starvation.”



CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ASSEMBLY OF THE GUILDS.



HOWEVER keenly and bitterly Master Jordan might, at all times, have censured the irrational proceedings of the goldsmith's family, now he thought no more of the follies through which so great misfortunes had arisen. Gideon Kürbis did not venture to show himself any longer. He had become the butt of the sneers and calumny of the whole town. The ladies and gentlemen toward whom, in his days of prosperity, he had been munificent, who had been his constant companions and friends, were now very indignant, as if he had insulted and deceived them. "Had we but known," said they, "that his affairs stood so, that he was acting so senselessly, we should have been ashamed to set a foot over his threshold." Those of whom he had borrowed money, or bought goods without having paid for them, and who now saw their loss before them, loaded him with the deepest curses, as an arch rascal who ought to be sent to prison.

Others, who had looked upon his splendour and parade with eyes of envy, rejoiced heartily over his fall, because he now lay deeper in the mire than they. Others, again, who had reproached him with being purse-proud, and who had predicted a sad end to him, rejoiced incessantly over their own wisdom, and how often they had said to him : "Pride always comes before a fall."

Poor Kürbis, forsaken now by all the world, was obliged, naturally, to leave his beautiful house, and place all he possessed at the disposal of his creditors. But neighbour Jonas went to him, full of compassion, and said : " My wife has prepared for you a small, but comfortable, room in our house. Come, and live with us, and be welcome to our plain household fare. We are, after all, old friends and neighbours ! " Gideon was sitting sad and silent : at these words, he burst out into loud weeping, arose, and, without being able to utter a syllable, followed his friendly comforter.

It was more than half a year before the complicated debt business could be got through. Of all his former property, Gideon retained nothing beyond the few clothes which he had on, when Jonas received him. Everything had been sold to the highest bidder. But the large empty house, and the spacious court and gardens behind, found no purchaser. They were too costly and splendid for every one. Thus the creditors, to whom the desolate buildings had been mortgaged, had them now to dispose of, as they could. These gentlemen often came together to consult, it is true, but no one was willing to lose anything ; hence they were never unanimous. Of the runaway notary, Edwin, nothing further was heard ; and as little of his sister Ida and the Polish Count.

After the story had been long enough canvassed over tea, coffee, wine, beer, and brandy, it was forgotten. Other incidents occurred, affording new matter for conversation.

Most curiosity and excitement was created by the Prince's convocation of all the guild-masters presiding over the hand-workers of the whole country. They were to assemble in the town-hall at Altenheim, no one could guess for what purpose. Master Jordan durst not absent himself either.

Privy Councillor Count von Salm appeared in the numerous and anxious assembly of the masters. In a long and able speech, he spoke of the paternal care of the Prince, of his kindly disposition towards his faithful subjects generally, especially towards the noble class of hand-workers. Then, by commission of his Highness, he proposed for common consideration the question, "How shall the industrial interests of the country be raised to a more flourishing condition, for hand-workers seem everywhere to be falling into ruin at accelerated pace? For the common welfare, it is necessary that they be assisted." (At these words the whole assembly expressed silent approbation; every face seemed joyous at the thought of being able to give good counsel.) "In France, in Switzerland, in Prussia, in other states," continued the speaker, "corporate immunities had ceased to exist; and, in their stead, liberty in the exercise of any craft has been introduced. The question was, is such a state of things feasible in this principality, and under what conditions?" (Perplexity and extreme dissatisfaction were legible in the features of the assembled masters of the guilds.)

"This much, at least, is certain, gentlemen," said the Privy Councillor, at the close of his address, "that guilds and corporate bodies, which, by their regulations, refined and improved industrial processes in times of old, when bondmen and bondwomen prepared the necessaries and conveniences of life for their masters and mistresses; those guilds and corporate bodies, I say, can no longer accomplish the same end by their regulations in our days. For through the progress of the arts and sciences, a multitude of new branches of industry, of mechanical contrivances and manufactures, have gained the ascendancy. The hand-workers will indubitably fall short, because they are

unable to compete with these latter in the quality, elegance, and cheapness of their wares.

“Can we, ought we, to forbid the importation of better articles from abroad? Ought we to give to our hand-workers exclusively the monopoly and the prerogative of preparing such articles; and, on the other hand, force the whole population to purchase such of them?”

“That would be injustice towards all, in favour of a few individuals. The public does not exist for the benefit of hand-workers, but hand-workers exist for the benefit of the public.

“Gentlemen, the times and social conditions have altered wonderfully. In former days, most of those who tilled the soil were bondmen and bondwomen. Now, however, they have the same civil rights and duties as those who inhabit towns. A hand-worker may, any day, if he has a mind, and possesses the means, leave his trade and turn agriculturist. Why may not an agriculturist, just as well, carry on a trade in his village, or exercise any other branch of industry, if he has the inclination and the ability?”

“Are the villagers to subsist solely for the enrichment of the towns? Are they to take their cattle and the fruits of the fields thither, to market, and fetch from hand-workers and shopkeepers there, the necessaries of life, to make things easier and cheaper for the towns? Why should not the villages, if they think fit, have their own shopkeepers and hand-workers?”

“I know of what value and advantage guilds and corporate immunities undoubtedly are in the present day; but I know also how much they have in them that is useless, unjust, and even injurious. It is, therefore, an earnest and important question for our country, to know what is most judicious to be done in this case. The matter is certainly a difficult one, and to be settled only with great care and circumspection.

“Gentlemen, according to the command of our gracious Sovereign and Prince, I lay it before you for consideration. I call upon you to give me your opinions.”

The Privy Councillor was silent. The auditory was silent too. Some, astonished, stared at the ground before them, and thought all sorts of things, or did not think at all. Others looked curiously into their neighbours' faces, as if to read their thoughts there. Many became quite timid at the unbroken, painful silence. They were very restless on their seats.

As no one opened his lips, though the Prince's deputy stood in expectation, and cast his eyes with increasing impatience, first upon one, and then upon another, he glanced, at last, upon the Court-girdler, whose powers of oratory were well known to him.

“Herr Guildmaster Jordan,” said he, “I invite you, as an experienced man, to communicate your thoughts, be they what they may, upon the matter.”

Jonas cleared his throat, rose somewhat slowly from his seat, and said: “The point is somewhat ticklish, your Excellency. Turn the thing over as one will, it has prickles on all sides, like a hedgehog. Therefore I perceive nobody will grapple it. I do not blame them. For very much is at stake here, your Excellency, and prudence beforehand, say I, is better than repentance afterwards. Certainly, much may be said for and against; but one priest will prove to another, from the same Bible, the contrary of what has just been affirmed. Therefore, I should say, let us make no more haste than good speed. We know that sudden decisions are seldom worth much. Hence, I should submit, with all possible respect, that it would be best for the assembled masters here to lay the weighty affair before their guilds. Where there are many heads, there will be many opinions, it is true;

nevertheless, the best sense is sometimes seen in nonsense. Good counsel comes over-night. Must has to be fermented before it becomes wine."

The guild-masters nodded agreement and applause. Nobody would speak after him. Thus the Court-girdler's proposition was unanimously resolved on, and the assembly dismissed.





CHAPTER XIX.

FREEDOM FOR INDUSTRY.



THE honourable presidents of the guilds left the dark council-hall in fear and doubt. But when they saw a crowd of curious apprentices, journeymen, and masters collected before it, their step became more stately. Each one became more conscious of his importance, at having been called and consulted by the Prince respecting state affairs. So they formed a stately procession, in their Sunday clothes, with the Sunday faces belonging to them, through the heap of interrogators, bowing right and left, but saying not a syllable of the secret of the negotiations.

But, on the other hand, so much the more willingly did they let their tongues run loose at home, as to what Count Salm had said, how he ought to have been answered, and what sort of a reply the guilds must now make. And still louder were they at night at the public-houses, in the town-hall cellar, in the taverns and drinking-rooms, where the eloquent masters, in the old-fashioned way, were accustomed to refresh themselves after work with wine or beer. The landlords had larger receipts from their customers now than commonly.

“What!” cried one, here: “will they take out of our mouths the last scanty morsel, and allow every

blockhead to bungle about in our toil-worn trade, and steal our few customers from us?"

"What!" cried another, "are we town burghers to be treated after the same fashion as those boors? Is the world to be turned upside down—towns to be turned into villages, and villages into towns? Is there any justice in the country, still?"

"What!" cried a third, "steal from us our old privileges—the inheritance from our fathers? No! no one can do it if they will not overturn all order in the land. Where there is any order, there is distinction of rank: ministry, military, middle class. Each has its own rights and privileges. Why are we hand-workers and burghers to be deprived of those rights, and of that respectability, which have belonged to the towns from days of yore? Why do they not begin with the clergy? Why are not the privileges of the nobility, the rights of birth, &c., abolished?"

There was noise and talk, discord and strife, in every house. In a short time, gentle and simple took part in the question of the freedom of industry. It was as if a revolution, or little civic war, were at the gate. The hand-workers had to hear a great deal that was disagreeable. They were reproached at one time with the arbitrary and dear prices of their goods; at another, with their coarse, tasteless, and not even durable work; then, again, with their gross grumbling demeanour, when sent from one master to another; next, that they often made customers wait longer than was necessary before they executed an order; further, that instead of bringing up to their business the apprentices entrusted to them, they rather employed them in waiting on the men and maids, and thus made them worthless. As is usually the case in all debates, each one thought he ought to carry off the victory for his own person, and opinion.

Meanwhile, most of them were called to their guilds again in a few weeks, to answer the questions of the government. Much was said, and long speeches made from morning until evening, because nobody would appear without having spoken—very useless trouble, after all, because the great majority seemed to have agreed beforehand what was to be done. And thus from the assembled guilds, the resolution was adopted unanimously, to represent in humble petition to the ruling powers the dangers of all innovation, in the existing circumstances of the class of hand-workers; respectfully to direct their attention to the impoverishment of the middle classes, in those countries in which freedom of industry had been introduced; and most humbly to implore his Highness to preserve and protect, after the manner of his ancestors, of glorious memory, all previously established and actually existing arrangements and privileges, of the guilds and corporate bodies.

Master Jonas had been, indeed, of a somewhat different opinion, and, as president of the guild, had reminded his brethren that they ought not to break the matter off thus short, but try to agree with the government, that did not assuredly ask without reason; that to retain the use of their old privileges, they should abolish the abuse; brush the dust well off the old robes, to be able to wear them with honour a little longer. But he saw that no one would give ear to such argument, so he was silent.

The petition of the guilds was handed over to the Prince.





CHAPTER XX.

THE PRIVATE CONSULTATION IN THE CASTLE OF THE PRINCE.

ONE evening, tolerably late, the Court-girdler was summoned to the castle. He was led into a splendid apartment, brilliantly lighted up, where he saw the Prince himself seated in an arm-chair before a table, the Privy Councillor standing by his side, and not far from both, a secretary, pen in hand, at a desk covered with documents.

“Ah! ah! Master Guildmaster,” said the Prince, addressing him as he entered, and feigning to be indignant, “I had not expected this from your wisdom! So, you have signed this famous petition too!”

The Court-girdler, who saw that his Sovereign was not very vexed, answered with a very low bow, but without embarrassment, “I did not sign it in my own name, but, as in duty bound, in the name of my guild.”

“Well, that will do. You are a sensible man, I know, therefore I have sent for you. I want to hear the opinion of a worthy and experienced tradesman, one who may best know what wants doing, and what can be done, respecting this affair of ours. But observe carefully, I will not talk here with the gentleman guildmaster, but with my old acquaintance, the upright Master Jordan, my Court girdler. I do not doubt you have thought the matter well over for yourself in private.”

“As a man like me may do, your Excellency. When a cry of fire is raised, people begin to consider how best to extinguish it.”

“Well then, master, there is the fire; where will you apply the engine? In the present condition of things, the public complain of the tyranny they have to endure from tradesmen; of the impoverishment of many men who would earn a subsistence, if ways and means were but left open. Unconditional freedom of industry is demanded. On the other hand, tradesmen cry out, and complain that they will be starved if every one, without distinction, is allowed to turn hand-worker; that, on the introduction of freedom of industry, they will all come to beggary at once; that the public will suffer the greatest loss from being deceived by block-heads. On this account, your guilds demand unconditional preservation of their privileges. Which way are we to take here? Right or left?”

“Between the two, gracious Sir! Corporate immunity and freedom of industry must subsist together; the middle way is the best way. Were there any single thing unrestricted under heaven, I believe it would swallow up the whole world in itself. Therefore, there is in no land unrestricted right, nor any unrestricted freedom.”

“Wisely spoken, master. I shall make you yet, in the end, my Court philosopher, if such people ever come into fashion, as Court singers and Court dancers have done. But tell me how freedom of industry and corporate control are to be connected? That is a contradiction clear as the sunlight.”

“Both must be tamed down, and accustomed to go together, your Excellency, like a couple of ill-tempered hacks that are not used to pull together at the same cart; but, most gracious Sir, if I may venture to say it, slowly, and with great caution. Too quick a pace breaks the wheel; easy goes a long way.”

“So yoke these two ill-tempered hacks, master, and tell me how to train them, so that they shall not upset the cart,” said the old Prince, heartily laughing. “Act as if you were in my chair, or on my throne, and had the country to govern.”

“Ah! your Excellency is pleased to condescend to jest. I could more easily carry our parish church, along with the steeple, through the city gate. Still, as your Excellency commands, I will tell you my thoughts, though they may be simple enough. But, as is the thread, so must naturally be the cloth.”

“To business then, Master Jordan.”

“For my part, then, I would abolish the tyranny of the guilds, but not their existence; I would allow liberty of trade, but not licentiousness. In villages, as in towns, I would allow tradesmen to establish themselves, and naturalised foreigners as well as natives. They might work, and send out hawkers as they please. But nobody should carry on a trade without having a patent for it from the government; and nobody should venture to hawk, except he be appointed by a patented tradesmen, and for wares prepared by himself. That would be number one.

“No person should receive a patent from the government who could not present a prior certificate from an inland guild, to the effect that he understands his business thoroughly, is a good workman, and possessed of satisfactory indentures. To be inscribed as a journeyman workman, he must show a specimen of his ability that is saleable, and not over dear. If the apprentice thus becomes a journeyman, he shall only pay a tax for being inscribed, but for no feasting and foolery, as is the case now-a-days, at the making of a masterpiece. Then he is at liberty to travel, or to take out a patent, and establish himself anywhere. If he gets the patent, then he is a master. The specimen of

work which he submitted before being received as journeyman was his master-piece. For the future, it shall be more difficult to become a journeyman workman than it now is to become a master. That would be number two.

“But now I come to the main point, to the great evil under which hand-work languishes, until it falls into continually increasing poverty and contempt. If the seed is worth nothing, how shall fruit be got from it? Among us, a boy is taken out of school before he has learned anything rightly; he is put apprentice too early, where he then forgets what he brought from school; he is afterwards set free, and made a journeyman, without being asked how much of his business he understands, but how long he has been learning it. Thus the journeyman is commonly only a grown-up apprentice, who need not sweep rooms any longer, and who, in the course of years, has learned a knack or two, and had a little exercise in them. Then he goes round to other masters in other towns, acquires another knack or two, becomes a master, and remains a bungler in business his life long.”

Here the Privy Councillor made a movement, in sign of approbation, and said to the Prince: “I believe the man has hit the nail on the head this time.”

The Prince was become more thoughtful too, and he motioned to the Master to continue.

“Were I ruler,” said he, “no boy should be taken from school, and set to a trade, before his twentieth year: until, according to the nature of his future calling, he understood all that is most essential in the art of drawing; all, too, that is indispensable, and even most useful for business purposes, in mathematics, mechanics, smelting, and other matters. He should not be admitted into any workshop without previous examination, and a certificate produced. The more

he brings from school to his trade, the richer will be hereafter the results of that trade."

"You carry it too far, Master Jordan," interrupted the Prince. "Where would your apprentices get all this learning?"

"Where the manufacturers get it, your Excellency. Ay, the true hand-workers of our time are the manufacturers. The rest of us are only hand-workers' assistants, because, now-a-days, hand-work has become head-work too. Manufacturers, chemists, mechanics, &c., have industrial schools; merchants, their commercial schools; officers, their military schools; rich farmers, their agricultural schools; teachers, their training schools; masons and carpenters, architectural schools. The state does something for all these, but it does too little, or nothing, for hand-workers. Yet folks are astonished at our growing poorer. Therefore, a better ordering of hand-work, and a more rational regulation of guild control, are necessary."

"Hark ye, good friend," said the Prince: "after all the fine things that I have heard, it seems to me that the control of a guild is quite unnecessary."

"Pardon me, your Excellency; order preserves the world! There is no regiment of soldiers, without drummer and officers. People could knock one another on the head well enough, it is true, without these."

The old gentleman laughed in his arm-chair. "Now, then, how would you draw up your regiment of hand-workers? The difficulty to be solved is: Corporate control and immunity, beside freedom of industry, within certain limits."

"That is the knot which one must untie. In the first place, most gracious Sir, a distinction must be made between free-hand workers, and those belonging to a guild. Those branches of industry which every

one, possessed of two eyes and two hands, may pursue without great difficulty, should be free to every one, because they are already carried on freely in most houses. Among such, I would reckon barbers and hair-dressers, soap-boilers, tallow-chandlers, gardeners, bakers, cooks, &c. &c. They should compose the free party. Secondly, the rest of the hand-workers, those of the true stamp, namely, in the towns and villages of a province, or of a district, form a great guild; thus a battalion, with a grand master at the head. This great guild divides into smaller ones or corporations, that is, into companies, each one with a guild-master. In each of these guilds, those branches of industry are bound together which are more or less related to each other; for instance, braziers, brass-founders and girdlers, in one; masons, plasterers, stonecutters, and stucco-workers, in another, &c."

"I understand," interrupted the Prince; "but I ask again, of what use are these guilds and corporations?"

"I think, most gracious Sir, to keep freedom of industry within proper limits, and confined to its proper purposes. Moderation is good in all things. Why should not tradesmen, who carry on branches of business differing amongst each other, and yet closely connected, be permitted to pursue several at once? Why should not the cabinet-maker be a glazier too, or the glazier a cabinet-maker: the bell-founder be a brazier too, or the brazier a bell-founder? Good! But in his guild he is inscribed, and by the government he has been patented, for that branch of industry only in which he has shown himself well qualified, by information, ability, and a specimen of his skill, sent from the workshop in which he had been apprenticed. Upon this matter, the guilds shall decide. The guilds are to watch over the unauthorised hawking of goods, belonging to their branches of industry; as competent

judges, they shall take into consideration, complaints relative to inferior work, or counterfeits, and such things.

“On the other hand, the assembled great guild of a province or of a district has only to decide on industrial matters of general interest, on resolutions and propositions to be laid before government, or make inquiry into business disputes between different guilds, and arbitrate if advisable. Thus every one in town and country may set up a trade, and that is freedom of industry. Hence the public will be secured against bad workmanship and imposition; and that I call order. By these means alone will hand-work again become honourable, based, not upon manual toil only, but upon general information, skill, and ingenuity, and able to enter into competition with manufactures.”

As Jonas stopped here, the Prince cried: “Further, further!” and proposed to him new questions. Jonas answered them, but henceforth with a great deal of caution; for he perceived that the secretary was taking down what he said, word for word. The conversation lasted until night.



CHAPTER XXI.

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

AFTER this conversation, a long time elapsed, and neither the ruling Prince nor Count Salm sent further for the Court-girdler to come to the castle. Jonas was well pleased at this. "One never knows," said he, "whether sunshine or tempest is coming there. The favour of the great is fleeting estate. Princes shine upon us very pleasantly from a distance, but if one approaches too near, one is apt to burn one's-self. It is better to be one's own master at home, than a servant abroad, with ribbon and star. And he who is master of himself is more than a king who is not so, although lord of all."

With these principles, he lived happily, always contented, cheerful at his work, good-natured amongst his journeymen and apprentices, honourable towards his customers, friendly and peaceable with the burghers, and brethren of his own craft. Martha and Christiane vied with each other in sweetening and varying the tranquillity and uniformity of domestic life. He, on the other hand, knew no greater pleasure than repaying these dear creatures joy for joy. The deeply-bowed Gideon Kürbis he cheered up as well as he was able, and all the members of his household followed his example. He did not leave him unoccupied either; for, as he often said, idleness makes

the soul sick, and brings strange thoughts into people's heads.

One thing only occasioned him a little care and anxiety, that was, the still uncertain fate of his modest possession. Unemployed, and without interest, it had to be there, until Gideon's great house found a rich purchaser. But none was forthcoming. It was offered for sale repeatedly, but to no purpose. The creditors often talked about it together. One encouraged the other to undertake the whole. Each was willing for this to make an abatement of his own claims. It was in vain. The empty, palace-like, splendid building, became worse in the meanwhile, and lost in value, the longer it stood uninhabited and neglected.

The shareholders, particularly, pressed Master Jordan to enter upon the gigantic and beautiful dwelling, because he was nearest it, and his old corner house by its side was not large enough for his business.

To have done with the matter, he yielded at last, on condition that they should forego the half of their claims, and for payment of the rest—principal, or interest upon it—be satisfied with very moderate terms. Veit himself, to whom Jonas had written, in France, about the difficulty, advised the speculation, and sent, as a contribution, the whole of the profits resulting from his partnership with the widow Bellarme.

“To me, at least, this undertaking does not seem at all ill-advised,” wrote Veit. “Think, then, dear father, that I shall want a place, if ever I return to Altenheim. And who knows how soon I shall be forced to it? The circumstances here are such as to be daily more doubtful and disagreeable. I long to get away, for urgent reasons, that must be nameless. Where should I find a better place to settle down in than close to father and mother?”

So Jonas decided, and the purchase was concluded. But neither he nor Martha could determine to leave their little homely room and chamber, every spot and corner of which was endeared to them by associations. Yet they were glad to set themselves more at liberty there, and to remove into the new house, the workshop, the retail shop, their stock of goods, and the sleeping places of the journeymen. And old Gideon, too, had to take up his abode again in one of his former rooms—now, indeed, stripped of all its splendour.

“See !” said Martha to her husband, as he stood there with folded arms, contemplating the changes which she had busily carried out : “now, then, is fulfilled what Grey Nanny once predicted to thee as a boy. Thy little house will swallow up the great one of a rich man ! My father told me of it at times, though the good fortune which she promised him and others, has unhappily come to nothing.”

Jonas took his little wife under his arm at these words, and replied, smiling, “How strange it is, that the soundest judgment, especially among you women, can be turned in a moment into folly, if, among a hundred things, a single one should by chance turn out at all like what had been prophesied ! The old witch did not, indeed, see the Lord God in the cards, when she was squinting at them. God leads his own wonderfully, but He does not tell them beforehand, else all marvel would be at an end, and we should be as wise as He. No ! no ! let superstition alone ! On the contrary, I am afraid that the great house may swallow the little one. We must not rejoice until we are out of danger. ‘There’s many a slip ’twixt cup and lip.’”

Verily, though the property might flatter Martha’s vanity, it occasioned the anxious Court-girdler more

than one hour's serious uneasiness. Veit might remain a long time abroad yet ; in the meanwhile, he heard of no lodgers for the many halls, rooms, and adjoining buildings. The interest was burdensome, and not less so, the cost of keeping everything in repair.

An event happened, however, that dissipated his thoughts a little. There appeared, namely, the long-expected or long-apprehended order of government, relative to matters of trade ; with a change in the previously-existing guild system, it established greater freedom of industry. That almost created a revolution in the country. Every one spoke of it as though he understood the matter best. What one praised and wished, another blamed and cursed. They disputed and scolded, laughed and lamented, as is usually done in such cases. Many of the propositions which Jonas had laid before the Prince were adopted in the "order," especially the patenting, because it might be lucrative to the treasury. But nevertheless, Jonas belonged to that party which disapproved of such a revolution in trade as this. Nor did he in any way conceal his dissatisfaction, when several guildmasters consulted him as to whether another petition should not be forwarded to the Prince.

"No, gentlemen," said he. "Have nothing to do with it. That is the way things go on in the world ; great folks prepare the porridge, and little ones must eat it. And if they have done wrong once, they will gladly do wrong again, in maintaining that they have not done wrong at all. It is very true, that our guild and trade system was worthless to us and to the country. But to improve it, the government has put a patch, not on the hole, but beside the hole ; helped the state to new revenues, but opened to the people a new way to impoverish themselves, by bungling and

spoiling trade. The main point—the living soul of the whole affair—is still wanting: the establishment of better preparatory, and more judicious instruction for our sons. There, gentlemen, there the wagon sticks fast. But we are to be satisfied with things as they are, so no more petitions; too much weight overdoes the clock. Let us take what we cannot refuse. What is one man's weal is another's woe. *Selah!*"

The new order of things was introduced amid the sighs and murmurs of the hand-workers. Many of them, however, found a great deal of comfort when, on the dissolution of the old guilds and corporate bodies, the property, accumulated for centuries, had to be divided among the present members. In vain Master Jordan exerted himself, with all his might, against the division of the property: in vain he exclaimed, "Do not pull down the pillar that may yet uphold the honour and the prosperity of hand-workers as a class. Rather build schools with it. Build industrial schools, that your sons, more able and skilful than we altogether, may make head against these foreign knights of the yardbands and English shopkeepers. Raise hand-work to head-work, I tell you, a hundred thousand times, or you will not find the golden reward of your forefathers."

The folks laughed at him. Each one pocketed his money, and thought to himself: "What would the fool do with schools? Ready money in the hand is better than learned lumber in the head. Let us leave that to the literators. I shall keep my share. Every man must take care of himself."

For a long time, nothing had so much disturbed the wonted cheerfulness and equanimity of the good-hearted Jordan as this want of judgment, this selfishness, this apathetic indifference of his fellow-citizens, towards that one thing which all needed. Yet he hoped

for a patriotic and wise effort on the part of the government, towards the establishment of training schools for young tradesmen; he hoped in vain. They could hardly meet the necessary expenses for beautifying castles, picture-galleries, monuments, court-banquets, travelling virtuosi, and other urgent necessaries.

"Tell me, dear Jonas, what ails thee? Why art thou so still and sad?" asked Martha of him, one evening when work was over, stroking his cheek.

"I have been so," replied he, "and am so no more." Then he took Martha upon his knee, and continued: "Hear, dearest mother. I see my way through it; have calculated in the ledger what our profits will be. And the thing will do, I tell thee. Thou and I, and Christiane, will not want any new clothes for a year or two yet, shall we? And then I think, that meat three times a week, instead of daily, will do for us. Veit, I hope, will help too. And then there is only about a couple of hundred guilders more wanted, and they will not trouble us much. I have already spoken with Veit's old teacher. He is a man after God's own heart. I will give the great ball-room in Gideon's house for it, and as many rooms as are needed."

Martha smiled as she looked in his eyes, and rubbing his forehead with the tip of her finger, said: "Is everything right here, in the upper story? Wilt thou give balls, soirées, pic-nics, and parties? What is the old professor going to do? Thou knowst he can't dance. What art thou thinking about?"

"What? I will establish a Sunday-school for apprentices and journeymen. Perhaps the town-council will contribute forms, desks, and tables. The payment of teachers for a few hours' instruction weekly, will not overburden me. Inkstands, rulers, slates, I will buy or beg. Ay, beg!" cried Jonas, as if inspired.

“ I will go begging, Martha, for the sons of our burghers, that they may not one day come to beggary. And, however mean it may make me, to gather crumbs from the tables of the rich, I shall feel proud as a king in doing it. Such begging is worthy of a king.”

“ And God,” said Martha, as now, deeply moved, she drew her arm more closely round the neck of her husband, and pressed a kiss upon his forehead, “ God will crown the work with his blessing.”

Her word was fulfilled, for in a short time he had unexpectedly got together so rich a harvest of contributions towards this undertaking of his in favour of the young, that its permanency was assured for at least six years to come. He had designedly passed by the doors of most of his fellow tradesmen ; even so, before the doors of the pious devotees, who send large sums of money for the promotion of Christianity to the East and West Indies, and leave impoverished Christian families in Altenheim helpless and friendless ; he had also gone by the doors of the “ principal people” and rich sensualists. But when he had finished his circuit, and was proceeding to the execution of the work, behold, the rest of the tradesmen, ashamed, announced themselves with their gifts ; and the pious people, and the “ principal” men came too, because they liked to have the reputation of being public spirited, and to hear their names pronounced. Even the Prince at last sent, unsolicited, several hundred guilders, and as a reward, or an acknowledgment to the praiseworthy girdler, the nomination to the post of “ Grand Master of the great guild of the province.” Jonas accepted the princely alms with grateful humility, but not the nomination intended to his honour. He declined it ; why, is not known.

The school for prospective or actual apprentices, for native and foreign journeymen, was opened without

ceremonies. Jonas was no friend to these. Not only on Sunday afternoons, but also twice in the week, during the evenings, instruction was given gratis, and numerous attended. Herr Gideon Kürbis rejoiced at appearing in a new sphere of labour, through an office of honour in his former house. He had, namely, to superintend the order and the cleanliness of the rooms, the supply of material necessaries, and the registry of pupils attending, or not attending.

Several teachers—some for a consideration, and others gratuitously—gave these youths who were desirous of learning, according to the amount of their knowledge, or as their calling in life required, instruction in writing, drawing, or accounts; on the subject of the powers of nature, different gases, and acids; properties of different sorts of wood, stones, metals, and salts; on the measurement of superficies and solids; but of all these things, absolutely only so much as could be made useful to a man of business; only so much as could be practically shown to be applicable. Choirs were formed, too, for male voices. Thus diminished by little and little, and at length entirely died away, in taverns and public-houses, the carousals and squabbles of the journeymen workmen. They soon began to conduct themselves better of their own accord. Presently, instead of Bacchanalian songs and foolish ditties, hymns in praise of the Almighty, of nature, and of the fatherland, were heard from the young men's choir.

But this was not all. Through presents from private libraries, by-and-by a very handsome collection of simple and useful works upon industrial processes, natural history, biography, and travels was formed. The more industrious of the students took some of these home with them, for amusement in their leisure hours. At last, Jonas procured not only a whole row of models

and frames of all sorts, but—such an adept in begging had he become by practice—a great quantity of samples and specimens of different wares and stuffs.

Old Gideon advanced thus to the dignity of librarian and inspector of technological collections. It did his heart good. On one evening, when the song of the young men's choir had moved him unusually, he went with tearful eyes to the happy Jordan, squeezed his hand, and said: "Yes, yes, Master Jonas, thus will hand-work again stand on golden feet, &c., as you often say. You are right. Yes, yes, perfectly right. *Nota bene*, had I been taught that in my youth, I should have become another man."



CHAPTER XXII.

THE TEMPTATION.



VEIT heard of the success of the good work from the exulting letters of his father, to which his mother never failed to add a postscript. He contributed richly, too, and willingly. But in the midst of his great and profitable business he was not happy, and had not been so for a long time. He had no want of amusements and diversions. The young widow, Bellarme, had done her utmost to make his residence with her ageeable ; she had done almost too much.

The young man, in the full bloom of manly grace and vigour, had been her favourite even during the life of her husband ; and when she adorned herself with mourning weeds, she adorned herself for him chiefly, and wished he were more to her than a favourite. His respectful reserve pained her. For his sake, she lived in the country, and amid the dark smoke-clouds of the forges could have forgotten the glories of the metropolis, Paris. After the expiration of the time of mourning, her eyes, instead of lamentation for the spouse too early taken from her, had learned another language. Veit well understood the tender glances which secretly said what the lips were silent upon, but he would make no reply.

Madame Bellarme had no lack of admirers, enraptured visitors, &c. She had the reputation of being a very rich match. But Veit carried his arithmetic in

his head only, not in his heart. She was a beautiful woman, charming from her fair brow, surrounded by raven-black locks, down to her little feet. She was intelligent, witty, lively, a fiery child of the south of France, and most ingratiating. But she knew it; she set a value upon it, and expected homage; and had, too, from time to time, capricious whims, quickly aroused sensibility, and now and then even bursts of passion.

The young Jordan had loved only once, and never again. Since Ida had painfully deceived him, he had seldom seen a maiden without secret suspicion. His mother alone, in her unassuming loveliness, in her pious equanimity, her ever active and faithful care and concern for domestic happiness, had remained his ideal of womanly worth. Madame Bellarme, enveloped in the finest and most tasteful of her ball dresses, glittering with pearls and brilliants, stood far beneath the girdler's wife, in cheap and simple, but cleanly domestic attire.

This apparent insensibility or bashfulness on the part of the handsome curly-head, only increased the passion of Madame Bellarme for him. Every glance of her dark eye, every grasp of her hand, every repressed sigh that escaped from her bosom, said to him, I love! He once had to accompany her to Paris, to the bridal ball of one of her friends, and under the brilliant crystal lustres, and amid the strains of entrancing music, they whirled together through the long rows of dancers. Passing into a side room, at the end of the waltz, to take a cooling draught of water, she sank upon his breast, and passionately whispered, "Oh, my only friend, what hast thou wrought in me? I live and die thine!"

More surprised than charmed with the enthusiastic or wild fondness of the woman, he pointed warningly to the hall door. It opened at that very moment. In silent embarrassment both went back to the dancers,

but with different feelings. She, in shame and fear, and trembling with fond hope; he, repulsed from her for ever, by that obtrusiveness which desecrates the charm of feminine beauty.

His cool, composed behaviour during the whole evening, seemed to her, the most amiable modesty of an inexperienced youth. But his repose, his earnest demeanour during the following days, his intentional shunning of all intercourse with her, soon appeared to her revolting, proud ingratitude. Still she wavered in doubt, until she succeeded, at last, in exchanging explanations with him in private. He acknowledged his obligations to her in the most flattering manner, yet spoke only of esteem and respectful friendship; but when she expressed the sentiments she entertained for him, he replied only by declaring his immovable resolution. Then she suddenly turned her back upon him, and left him with flushed face and eyes full of tears. It was not the flush of shame, but intense hatred; they were not tears of anguish, but enraged pride.

With this decisive hour, ended all social intercourse and communion between the two. They lived in the same house, but seldom met. When they could not avoid crossing each other's path, every movement of the exasperated dame was an insult to her former favourite. Soon after, she went to Paris, and contrived from there, through her agents, and servants, and book-keepers, to cause him such continual annoyance, and so many vexatious contradictions in business, that he must perceive his stay could not be a very long one. A proposition was also made to him, that for the sake of peace, an investigation of the joint concern, along with Madame Bellarme's man of business, and a separation, would be most advisable.

Without hesitation or delay he consented. But half a year passed away in taking stock, in examination

of accounts, and in division of mutual claims. Besides, more than one of those complicated cases appeared, the decision of which could be sought only in a law-suit. It was plain enough that Madame Bellarme, herself, was the busiest in maliciously entangling the affair farther, whenever possible. Veit, however, was satisfied rather to suffer injury and injustice, than to contend for a dubious right before a court of law.

He sent home an account of this sudden change in his destiny, with all the circumstances. It is true, that he complained of the different losses he had to sustain, and of the iniquitous proceedings of Madame Bellarme, or her agent. But he did not conceal either, that in the consciousness of innocence, he was more content to have suffered undeserved insults, than he could have been had he heaped them upon others. But the approbation of his parents was a greater consolation to him, almost, than that of his own conscience.

“Thou hast done well, my brave boy!” wrote Father Jonas to him. “Come home, we await thee with impatience. Ingratitude is the world’s reward. Now that they have made use of thee, they turn thee out of doors. I thought to myself from the very first, that no good would come from thy connection with the widow.

* * * * * *

Truly, thou mightst have become a great man with the lady, but better thou hast remained a free man. A poor man who marries a rich woman is, after all, only her first *valet-de-chambre*.

“Our new hand-workers’ school is flourishing. It will delight thee. But there is very much to be done at it, yet. Come back, and do not squabble with lawyers; they are the greatest of all jugglers. A mean adjustment is more satisfactory than a rich suit at law.”



CHAPTER XXIII.

THE REWARD OF SIN.



HEIT had been absent from home more than three years. How he rejoiced at the thought of seeing it again, and being henceforth the joy and support of his parents, who were now approaching to old age ! Still they were in the full vigour of life ; the father far beyond fifty, the mother more than forty.

At last, nothing further detained him. The dissolution of partnership between him and Madame Bellarme was accomplished, his collected property converted into good bills ; his portmanteau packed.

Then he received, a few days before his departure, a letter that agitated him uncommonly. During the perusal, astonishment, grief, and compassion, alternated in his mind. The letter came from a little town on the Rhine. It came from Ida, who still subscribed herself Ida Kürbis, instead of Countess Ida Garinsky, as might have been expected. The contents were somewhat as follows :—

“ I know not, oh, never-to-be-forgotten one, whether I should say *thou* or *you*. My heart says daily, *thou*. In the sweetest of my dreams I call on *thee*. However, as I have heard from a gentleman travelling, who knows, and had to tell me much of you, that you are in high prosperity ; you are rich ; and I am necessitous, forsaken, sick, nigh to desperation, and

the grave. That traitor and deceiver, that Garinsky, who robbed me of innocence, honour, property, and my dear parent, was a dissipated adventurer, a comedian, a player. At Prague he left me, a few months after our flight from Altenheim, in the most perfidious and dastardly manner. My last jewels, and the last of my ready money he took with him. Where he went with them has never been discovered. And just as unknown to me has remained the fate of my brother. It is said that he was imprisoned for some crime in Alsace, and sent to the galleys at Toulon.

“Now I sit mourning here, a repentant sinner, in tears—a penitent Magdalene. Ah! how many a worthy but vain burgher’s daughter, who, like me, wanted to rise above her station in life, has suffered herself to be blinded and led astray, by the flattery and the vows of men of fortune. Ah! noble friend! Had I but followed your counsel! Had I but married an honourable, industrious, even if poor, tradesman, now I might have been a happy housewife. True, my dear parents—yet no! I will not accuse them—I bear all the blame. Oh! had I followed thee, thou darling of my childhood—thee, still the guardian angel of my existence!—but I cannot—I will be silent. My heaven is lost!

“And still, in the anguish of a broken heart, I turn to you, angel of my childhood; to you, whom fortune has so highly favoured. Do you help me! I am living here, in a little town, with a venerable, pious matron, Madame Schlakker, who has received me like a mother. She will purchase me admittance into a benevolent institution for females, where I may spend my days in pious exercises of devotion, and live estranged from the sinful world. But a thousand florins are wanted, to make up the necessary sum. Help the poor Ida, whom you once called your Ida! You are rich. Art

thou still the good-hearted, tender, and amiable Veit, as of old? Oh! do not forsake me in my need! Answer me!"

The letter was still longer. It closed with complaints, and prayers to God. A few light, pale spots upon the paper, appeared to be the vestiges of tears wept over it. After brief consideration, Veit determined to help her, who had been the object of his love in early life, but who now, through the pride of her parents, and her own indiscretion, was become one of the most unhappy of her sex. But, instead of sending by post the sum she required, he preferred making a little circuit on his journey home, to see the poor unfortunate creature for himself; and after being more particularly informed of her present sad situation, to prepare a better lot for her in the future.

With this humane resolution, he travelled to Paris, to pay a farewell visit to Madame Bellarme, which the latter, however, declined to receive. Then he set off for the Rhine and Germany.

As soon as he had reached the town mentioned by Ida, he went at once, although it was late in the day, to the dwelling of Madame Schlakker. She was a withered and wrinkled old woman, who sat in her little, ill-ventilated shop, selling tobacco, cheese, butter, tar, oil, and candles. He had formed to himself quite another picture of the "venerable, pious matron."

"What have I to do with the lewd mortal?" cried she, angrily, as soon as she heard the name, Ida Kürbis. "I have turned the wench out of my house long since, though she is to this hour seven guilders fifteen kreutzers still in my debt. I have laid arrest on her wages, however. I am an honourable woman, and will have no shameful doings here. Take yourself off, sir! Seek the vile creature elsewhere!"

Poor Veit was not a little surprised at so uncour-

teous a reception, and at so bitter expressions against the beautiful daughter of Herr Gideon. Yet he kept his temper, suspecting a mere misunderstanding, and sought for plainer explanations. But the surly old woman was very short with him, and pointed with her shrivelled hand to the door, while she said: "If it is of so much consequence to you to see Ma'amselle, go seek her at her lodging, at tailor L  pplin's, in the dirty — street. But she is not at home now; she is playing at the theatre this evening."

He heard no more here. What he had heard he could not believe. It was in too direct contradiction of the letter which Ida, "the penitent Magdalene," had written to him. Embarrassed and aggrieved, he went through the streets, and had himself conducted to the theatre, where a band of strolling players were exhibiting their talent to the easily-pleased public of the place. He arrived at the last act, and immediately on his entrance, saw a young maiden bouncing about upon the stage, and, with a most smiling naivet  , avowing to her scolding uncle that, instead of one lover, she had full half-a-dozen. As little as Veit, an hour before, in the shop of the worthy old cheese-seller, had been able to believe his ears, just as little now would he rely upon the evidence of his eyes. He drew closer to the stage. It was she—yes, she—skipping about in that tawdry finery. His heart throbbed convulsively in his bosom. Veit, in amazement, concern, and abhorrence, went back to his inn. He had no further wish to speak to the dishonoured, deeply-sunken being.

His first impulse was to leave the town without seeing her. Yet he changed his mind next morning. There was still a possibility, perhaps, of saving the unhappy creature from irretrievable and eternal ruin. Even that letter, though composed of falsehoods only, and fair phrases, seemed to point to such possibility.

He would pay her debts, and persuade her to return with him to Altenheim, and to the arms of her father.

So he sought out her lodging. He entered her room, where he found her, in a dirty night-dress, carelessly thrown on, and learning one of her parts. She sprang up, startled at the sight of him, and gazed at him for some moments in silence. But, soon collecting herself, she hastened towards him with theatrical enthusiasm, and he soon found, from her conversation and behaviour, that she was utterly lost to all sense of virtue; and, though he pitied her depravity, he left her in disgust, for ever.





CHAPTER XXIV.

CONVERSATION ON THE ROAD.

DEEPLY dejected, he found himself in the inn again. He would not remain a moment longer in the town that had been the scene of the most distressing spectacle in his young life. Had he found the goldsmith's daughter on her death-bed, he would not have shuddered so much at the sight.

Still many days' journey distant from Altenheim, he consigned his portmanteau to the post, filled a light knapsack with what was most necessary, threw it over his shoulders, and pursued his way from the city gate, as a sturdy pedestrian. He felt the necessity of distracting and forgetting himself. So he chose again upon German soil a pleasure he had long been deprived of—the harmless life of a travelling handwerks-bursch. The morning was cool, the country pleasant, between cornfields, hills, and oak plantings; but he could not forget Ida, the deeply sunken and degraded.

“And how many of these unfortunate creatures have I not found, like her!” thought he: “that is the moral murder which parents commit on their children. The future lot of a daughter is more difficult to foresee than that of a son, yet much less consideration for the casualties of life is had in her case, than in his. Poor Ida! Thy beauty, through the foolish fondness and vanity of thy parents, became a curse to thee. In-

stead of preparing thee to make a worthy man and a whole household happy, one day, by the religious feeling, and activity, economy, cleanliness, and love of order, by thy educating good servants and protecting the innocent hearts of children, they taught thee to be haughty, to decorate and disguise thyself, to coquet, dance, play music, declaim, take part in romances, criticise and calumniate others, to become thyself, hereafter, the subject of ridicule, or of compassion, and now of abhorrence. And mothers it is who poison the hearts and understandings of their inexperienced daughters. Poor Ida !”

Veit, who in his dejection had abandoned himself to such and similar thoughts, was disturbed in them by the sight of a pocket-book embroidered with pearls, lying in the dust on the high road. He picked it up, cleaned it, and cast a glance around, on all sides, to discover, if he could, who might have lost it. And he very soon perceived at a tolerable distance a solitary pedestrian, who sometimes stood still, sometimes proceeded again, and sometimes seemed to wish to turn back. Veit doubled his pace, until he overtook the traveller. He was a handsome man, of agreeable features, about forty years old, clad in a green surtout and straw hat, like one taking a walk.

“You are seeking something, perhaps ?” asked Veit, greeting. “Have you——”

“I have lost my pocket-book. Perhaps you——” interrupted the stranger with expectant face.

Young Jordan gave what he had found to the stranger, who thanked him with visible joy, but then, as if embarrassed, asked : “Did you examine the contents ?”

On receiving the fortunate finder’s reply in the negative, the other repeated his acknowledgments more warmly, and both pursued their way sociably together.

Their conversation, that for a long time had turned on ordinary matters, became mutually more attractive, when it appeared from question and answer, that each knew London and Paris, though they had formed opposite opinions respecting life in these cities, and their worth, from different points of view.

“It is remarkable, though,” said the stranger, “I have never been so unfortunate, in all my travels, as in this accursed little district, through which we are now going. To-day, I lost my pocket-book ; the day before yesterday, my chaise broke down on the villanous turnpike ! In the little market town behind us, because yesterday was I know not what holiday, there was neither a wheelwright nor smith to be had.

“I lost a whole day through it, and saw only processions of all sorts streaming hither, and swarms of beggars of both sexes. Notwithstanding, the splendid abbey near the town must be very rich.”

“In my travels,” said the girdler’s son, “I never saw hungry looking cloisters in rich villages ; pious simplicity will everywhere give land and money to be held in mortmain, in exchange for a convent’s alms, beggars’ staves, and assignations on the joys of eternity.”

The stranger smiled roguishly, but continued : “Not only here, but everywhere in this district, the people seem to be idle and ignorant. The capital alone is decent ; elsewhere there is nothing to be seen but cities without trade, filthy villages, and, on the best of soil, mismanaged fields and meadows. It is remarkable. I confess I am astonished.”

“I am not at all, sir. Where the third part of the year is swallowed up in Sundays, saints’ days, and holidays, we usually find full churches and full public-houses, beside empty fields and empty workshops. Very often the government do not see the misery of the villages, through the splendour in their capital.”

The traveller cast a strange side glance at his neighbour, and said : " I know it is the fashion in these days to accuse the government, when even the most zealous are unable to promote reform among a mass of coarse and clumsy people."

" Very much depends upon what is understood by reform : whether reduced and more equally divided imposts, along with increased freedom of industry and intercourse, or more glittering stipends for courtiers, titled gentlemen, the wearers of decorations, and the menials of luxury fed at the people's expense. Whether ball-rooms, opera houses, and splendid buildings, to gratify the love of pomp, and the pride of idle loiterers, or workhouses in which the lazy might be forced to labour, penitentiaries, and prisons on an improved plan, for those convicted of crime. Whether encouraging lotteries, retreats for sensuality, gaming-tables, liquor shops, that enrich the public treasury, but load the people with vice, or town schools for the training of better tradesmen, village schools for rearing more rational agriculturists. Our statesmen and financiers do not seem to have come to a clear understanding yet of what is meant by reform."

A little astonished at these words, Veit's companion stopped a moment, looked at the young man rather more earnestly, and asked : " With whom have I the pleasure of speaking ?"

" My name is Jordan ; I am from the principality of Altenheim, by business a journeyman-girdler, gun and statue-founder."

" What !" cried the latter, with a voice of incredulity, " journeyman-girdler, gun-founder, and statue-founder ? Strange !"

" And with whom," began Veit, " if I may ask, have I the honour to——"

Before he could complete the question, the answer

was, "I am Count Königsfelden. But, young man—so! Jordan? From Altenheim? Journeyman girdler? Strange! You have shown more information and culture than are usual among journeymen. You were destined, probably, earlier in life, for higher studies?"

"Oh, no!" replied Veit, and without hesitation told the story of the poverty of his father and grandfather; spoke of the principles of his worthy parents, of his school years and years of travel, and how, after necessary preparation in the acquisition of a preliminary knowledge of chemistry and mathematics, he had been able to visit, not without advantage, the museums, cabinets of natural history, manufactories, and great workshops abroad. His noble auditor, whose face bespoke astonishment mingled with pleasure, often interrupted the narrative with questions, until a handsome travelling carriage rolled up at full trot, and put an end to the conversation. For the carriage stopped; two attendants jumped down to open the door of the chaise; a gentleman clad in black, within the carriage, respectfully uncovered his head.

"Now, my friend," said the Count, tapping Veit on the shoulder familiarly, "I am indebted to you. We shall see each other again. I should like to continue our agreeable conversation, but I need to hasten on. Farewell!"

Herewith, he sprang into the carriage, nodded once more kindly to the pedestrian behind, and drove off.





CHAPTER XXV.

HOME.



INSIGNIFICANT as this little incident might be, yet it helped a little to dissipate the wanderer's melancholy; he soon forgot the goldsmith's dishonoured daughter, who was now as loathsome as she had once been dear to him. He pursued his journey but slowly, along highways and byways, through the Rhine districts, where the great industrial towns, with their public institutions, works of art, manufactories, and other things of note, magnetically attracted him. Even that which had not immediate reference to his business was not indifferent to him. He wanted to learn everywhere, and, thirsting for knowledge, he drew in his journal a number of things that might be available to him afterwards; or he formed acquaintances, that would one day be of use to him in his business.

After a ramble of several weeks, he saw at last the church-tower and the tall battlements of Altenheim before him. It was on a Saturday. Amid hope and fear as to how he might find his parents, his heart throbbed more violently as the town confronted him more and more clearly, through the yellow mists of distance. He passed through the gate. Everything seemed new and strange to him, although the streets were but little altered.

A timid and joyous shudder shot through his frame

when he reached the castle-yard, and beside the huge building of the former goldsmith, he saw the little corner house, the modest dwelling of his righteous father and his dear mother. Uncertain how things stood within, he was almost afraid to enter. He turned to ask a young flaxen-headed maiden, who was sweeping the court-yard in front of the house, and so busy with her besom that she shrunk back frightened, when she saw a tall robust young man beside her.

“Don’t be afraid, child,” said he; “or perhaps thou dost not belong to the house of Master Jordan?”

The maiden, perplexed and pale as death, looked him in the face mutely; her arms slackened, and the besom fell to the ground, but a glow soon came over her forehead, her cheeks, her chin, and her neck. “Oh, heavens! is it thou, Veit? No, impossible!”

He who had been thus addressed as an old acquaintance by one unknown to him, looked astounded into her beautiful face and bright blue eyes, and exclaimed in turn, “Impossible! thou art not—why, how tall thou art become—Christiane! Art thou she?”

The maiden left the astonished man standing; left her besom lying; hastened into the house with the cry: “Veit is here! Veit!”

He followed her. Speechless and trembling, he saw his mother in the passage; and trembling and speechless, she sank into his arms. Father Jonas soon hastened out of the workshop with rapid steps, and though his face was covered with smoke and soot, embraced his darling boy.

“Now, then, thou simpleton!” cried he, joyously, and pushing Christiane, who stood by motionless, towards the new-comer, “dost thou not know the boy again? Tell him he is welcome, then, thou silly little mortal!”

She lay on his bosom, mute. Her lips burned upon his. A tear fell warm from her eye on his cheek.

“Holiday! holiday!” shouted the old man into the workshop, came back again, and once more, with naked, sinewy arms, seized his son, to press him to his heart again.

But why describe the intoxication of joy in the little family? Not on that day, nor on the following, did they regain their composure. Master Gideon Kürbis, too, mingled in the household jubilee. But he went about bowed, and seemed to be older than he really was; and there was a more painful expression in his face, even when he smiled. Veit did not venture to allude in the most distant manner to the past, still less to give him any intelligence of the actress *Ida*, or the culprit at the galleys, *Edwin*.

Veit was happy. He thought he had never been so before, to the same extent. He lived a new life in his beloved home, always near to his parents, and in intercourse with the amiable and beautiful *Christiane*, who was now dear to him as a real sister, and soon, far dearer. Everything, ay, everything, was as he had left it years ago, as he had known it from childhood—only *Christiane* not. There stood yet the two well-scoured old deal tables, wrinkled, though, from the protruding fibres of the wood; there were the straw-bottomed stools still, and at the window, *Mother Martha*’s arm-chair, before which as a child he had repeated his lessons; there still hung the same little glass between the windows; and the wall clock above the stove sent forth its tic-tac as fast as ever. *Father Jonas*, in his enlarged workshop, with more journeymen and apprentices, soldered and hammered, filed and formed still, from morning to night, as before; the noble housewife flew about yet busy as a bee; she had

managed the housekeeping without a servant since Christiane had been grown up.

And Veit came back with the same cheerful disposition that he had ever shown. In the simply-furnished rooms which Martha had fitted up for him, in the upper story of the house, he forgot the splendid halls, the boudoirs, and ante-chambers of London, Paris, and the Bellarme estate; the Gobelin tapestry, the gold-framed pictures, the convenience of elegant furniture, and the artificial delicacies of the table, on silver plate.

Immediately after his arrival, he set about preparation for the establishment of his foundry. Great space was necessary, but the extensive house adjoining afforded it in abundance. Wood and stone for building were brought together; the former garden-ground of Herr Gideon Kürbis, that had extended to the meadow beyond the town, was half broken up; sheds for carriages, stables, and other buildings in the court-yard behind the house, that might be dispensed with, were converted into smelting-houses, coal-stores, and workshops of various kinds. A stock of rough metals soon came, and tools and implements ordered from distant towns and manufactories. Veit had well applied his journey to this purpose, and on the way, concluded advantageous agreements and bargains with mechanics and wholesale merchants.

Before all that was completed, as was intended, a number of journeymen and labourers appeared, engaged by him upon the way. And very soon the noise and din of anvils, hammers, lathes, and saws were heard, by the side of huge chimneys that rose high above the roof; and over the great door of the principal building in the castle-yard might be read the inscription, in letters of gold, on a signboard: "Bell and Cannon, Bronze and Brass Foundry of Veit Jordan."

A foundry of this kind, and of this extent, was the

first in Altenheim. Even the smaller cast-wares, such as mortars for apothecaries, and cocks, taps, candlesticks, metal cylinders, house-bells, &c., were for the most part brought from abroad. The young beginner had an uncommon deal to do, as may be imagined. He led on everywhere; he divided and examined work; he taught better methods, and the best application of newly-invented tools; he helped in cutting models, or in the making of forms of nice calculation; or he sat amongst crucibles in his own laboratory, or at his desk, designing, or carrying on his correspondence. In addition to this, he was the most zealous teacher on Sundays in the school founded for hand-workers by the Court girdler-master.





CHAPTER XXVI.

SURPRISE ON SURPRISE.



HIS restlessness, united with knowledge of business, and cautious prudence, was not without its good effect. In a short time, he was able to supply every one in the principality who wanted small cast-wares, either for his own use or for trade, with better and stronger made, and yet at a more moderate price, than they had been able to obtain from distant quarters. At the end of the first year, even, he received commissions from foreign houses known to him, and also for a neighbouring parish cast the first church-bell.

The young master ought to have been satisfied, and yet he was not so ; and still less when he had worked through the heaviest confusion of business and care, and given everything fixed order and a regular course, so that many an hour remained vacant on his hands. He would much rather have filled it up with other matters than with often unnecessary superintendence of those in his employ ; for the plans with which he had returned home were of a somewhat elevated design. Amongst other matters, he was not going to rest satisfied with his father's Sunday-school, but to establish an industrial school on a large scale, for artisans, manufacturers, and hand-workers, such as he had admired in Paris, M_unich, Carlsruhe, and other cities.

This he must now, alas, renounce ; for he had

reckoned on the support of the good old Prince of Altenheim, with whom Father Jordan stood in high estimation. But the Prince lived no longer; a stroke of apoplexy had gathered him to the tomb of his illustrious forefathers. The new regent, a nephew of the deceased, who had formerly held a command in the army of some great foreign power, seemed inclined to almost too severe economy. He simplified the magistracy and their business; diminished the number of officials, reduced the expenditure in military uniforms; ay, even limited the festivals, balls, and all sumptuous outlay at Court. He was seldom seen.

As folks said, he was incessantly occupied in his cabinet, or travelling through the towns and villages of the land, where he inquired into the most trivial circumstances, necessities, and arrangements. To get money together, or to prevent it from going out of the country, he laid tremendously heavy burdens upon brandy distilleries, and places for the sale of liquors; even upon the preparation and consumption of this drink, in and for private households. He prohibited all games of chance, and all lotteries in the land; the vendors, if detected, as well as the purchasers of tickets, were to be punished with heavy fines; to say nothing of other and similar regulations, which he undertook on his accession. This made many dissatisfied in the land.

One of these was, as has been said, Veit; although he liked neither brandy nor games of chance.

"It grieves me to be obliged to give up the beautiful thought," said he one day to his father, with whom he was walking up and down before the foundries and the smiths' shops, as they were accustomed to do together, after dinner. "What I have about me here, though nothing in comparison with the establishment of Bellarme, has cost me considerably more than

I had calculated upon. Of all my earnings and savings in London and Paris, there are very few thousand guilders remaining."

"I believe it!" said Master Jordan, thoughtfully nodding his head in sign of assent. "He who will bake himself pancakes, must break his eggs for it. I cannot help thee, I have nothing, but am glad to have cleared off the debt on Kürbis's house, within a trifle."

"But, dearest father, what dost thou think? Ought I to apply to our new Prince? Or what do people hope, what do they expect from him? Opinions about him are so very contradictory."

"Well, boy, while hope is pending, life is sweet, they say. He was not sparing in fine promises, at least, in his printed proclamations, which were stuck up at all street corners to be read, on his accession. Now then we will await the golden season. In spring all the cherry-trees hang full of blossoms; but those who come later to fetch the promised cherries, go home often with empty baskets. Put that out of thy head for the moment. I wanted, properly, to talk with thee to-day about quite a different thing."

"And yet, dear father, it would be a most benevolent undertaking for the whole country. Our hand-workers, I am more and more convinced daily, are sinking fast. Things will be brought to such a pitch in time, that the most difficult labour will be performed by machines, quicker and better than by the readiest hands."

"Thou art right, Veit. In old times men might say, hand-work stands on golden feet! But now the cry is, hand-workers must become artisans, else the manufacturers will stand on golden feet, and hand-workers in the mud. Thy aim is good, and praiseworthy; keep it steadily in view only."

"I do keep it steadily in view," replied the young

man, with enthusiasm. "But to carry out the good cause, I need powerful support."

"Friend! one's own legs are the best support," replied the father. "Thou wilt always go lame on crutches, were they made of ivory or mahogany, believe me! But let us talk of something more agreeable. That thy feet may not grow weary on the long way before thee, leading to the object in view, and that thou mayst not lose courage on the way, take to thyself another pair of stout limbs, that is my advice. Take Christiane's feet, for instance; she'll give thee them, I'm sure, and thou wouldst like to have them; that, mother and I have long observed."

At these unexpected words, Veit stood silent, and as if in the glow of one of his own smelting furnaces. Then, violently and deeply agitated, he seized both his father's hands, and cried—

"Dearest father, is that real earnest? Is it, indeed? Thou and mother have again and again said, I must seek out a rich maiden for my business; therefore, and therefore only I feared——"

"But is Christiane," interrupted the old man, "is not she the richest burgher's daughter of the town? Which of them amongst all, will venture to compare with her in endowments? Which in treasures of the heart and in understanding, in information and in ant-like industry, in beautiful meekness, or in dignified virtue?"

Veit was just about to chime in with the praise, and express his transport, when the conversation was interrupted by a new surprise. One of the workmen ran up hastily, and informed them that young Herr Jordan was asked for by some officers.

Indeed, three persons stepped into the court-yard, two in uniform, that indicated the rank of chief artillery officers; the third was in civil habiliments—black

coat and round hat. Master Jonas retired ; his son went, vexed and unwillingly, to meet the visitors.

One of the officers in advance said, as he pointed to the gentleman in the coat behind, " His Highness the Prince desires to inspect your foundries."

" The Prince !" faltered Veit, a little amazed, and casting an anxious look at his leather apron, rolled-up shirt sleeves, and naked, grimy arms. His eye sought the Prince. Then the well-known Count Von Königsfelden came forward, and said, after he had regarded him for a moment with uncertain air, " Right ! you are the man ! Do you know me still ? The Count Von Königsfelden allowed himself to tell you a bit of a fib on that turnpike road."

" Your Highness will be pleased"—stammered the embarrassed bell-founder. " My dress at the moment——"

" Nonsense !" interrupted the Prince. " Leathern apron and jacket are the hand-worker's true gala-cos-tume. Therein he may stand worthily before any king. I am your debtor of old. Don't you remember the pocket-book ? I want to pay you off. You are a cannon-founder. I want a battery of eight-pounders for the arsenal. On that matter, however, these two gentlemen will go further into detail with you. The old professor of physics at the Gymnasium has spoken to me about your plans, and communicated to me your project for the foundation of a higher industrial school.

" In spite of all the freedom of industry existing in the land, my friend, you must not interfere with me in my trade, any more than I with you in yours. I like to carry on my business of governing myself. But your counsel will be very agreeable to me. More of that hereafter, I will send for you. Now lead me round through all your workshops. I know you are avaricious of time ; I am too."

On this he stepped forward, without awaiting an answer. Veit, almost confused at what had occurred, followed. He recovered speech and composure only when he had to answer the inquisitive Prince a hundred questions about the processes through which a variety of articles had to pass. The visit lasted several hours. The Prince expressed satisfaction. At last, when he left the extensive premises, he took the son of the girdler aside, and said—

“Young man, I thank you. You are possessed of much more knowledge than I expected, and your designs are far more patriotic than those of many above you. I will make use of you. Thus far in the government of the land, as was fitting, I have only cleared away rubbish, and torn off old patchwork. Now I am about to build anew. We will talk further together. I will send for you. Respecting the battery, apply to these two commanders of artillery. The Polytechnic School is my affair, I tell you!”

Herewith he took leave.





CHAPTER XXVII.

ALL IS WELL THAT ENDS WELL.



AS the family of the Court-girdler sat sociably together in the evening, they seemed like the blissful in heaven. It would be difficult to say which thought themselves the happiest, the young betrothed, or the parent couple. Jonas supported the faithful Martha. Both looked blessings on their children, who sat opposite, with arms encircling each other. A thousand things were discussed: the favour and the condescension of the Prince, the construction of the cannon, preparations for it, profit from it, the founding of the new school, other designs of the governor, but, naturally enough, more particularly, the future housekeeping of the young couple. It was resolved unanimously that everything should remain as it hitherto had been—parents and children under the same roof, at the same table, having all in common together, weal and woe: each the other's help, hope, and comfort.

And it was settled so. On the following Sunday marriage was announced, and a few weeks later, celebrated in the same pleasure-garden before the gate, in the very same arbour, and just as simply, as had been the nuptials of the parents almost thirty years before. Excepting Herr Gideon Kürbis, and an old professor, Veit's former favourite teacher, few guests

had been invited. There were two wealthy, respected citizens, with their wives, who had for years been very friendly with the house of Jordan and attached to it; hand-workers, to whom Master Jordan had been, and remained, counsellor and model from their commencement in trade. Cheerful mirth, cordial expressions of love, of friendship, and gratitude, were the ornaments of the feast. Nor did Father Jonas fail to give an energetic discourse as before; but this time there was no purse of gold forthcoming for the worthy preacher. They sat together, enjoying themselves over a glass of wine until evening, while at home, in honour of the day, there was a good feast for the journeymen, apprentices, workmen, and labourers, without exception.

These well-treated folks had planted themselves in rank and file, all together, before the corner house, on the return of their masters and mistresses, and received them with shouts of joy and the noisiest congratulations, so that a number of the passers-by stopped upon the castle square, to be witnesses of the joyous uproar. But it did not escape the notice of those thus saluted, that there was something very strange in the demeanor, in the confidential nods and whispers, and the half repressed laughter of the old and young work-people and house-servants. But this was attributed to the effect of the wine; and they entered the house, into which the noisy throng had already advanced, in rank and file, and from the front door to the staircase blocked up the entrance to the rooms on the first floor.

“What is the matter, good folks? Let us in,” cried Father Jonas. “Is wine wanting? You must have enough, and more than enough.”

One of the old journeymen came forward, made a very low bow, and held a solemn discourse, which concluded with a respectful invitation and request,

that the newly married pair would enter their own apartments first, and have them hallowed by the blessing of their parents. "We must obey, I can see, for you are the stronger party," said Jonas, smiling, in expectation of a little surprise. Veit, with Christiane, went forward laughing; the father and mother followed, and were accompanied by two old journeymen, who opened the doors, decorated with great garlands of flowers.

But how surprised were they on entering! Everything was changed! Jonas cast his eyes round the room; then, shaking his head at Martha, stood, like her, almost petrified. Not less amazed, Veit and Christiane looked at the elegant, and indeed splendid furniture, the beautiful window-curtains, tastefully arranged, the large mirror between them, glittering in a gold frame; the writing-desk of mahogany, with a bronze argand-lamp upon it; the polished tables, the stuffed chairs, a sofa along the walls.

The old journeyman was assailed by a host of questions from on all sides. He shrugged his shoulders with a silent smile, as though answering was forbidden him. He opened the door of the adjoining apartment in which Veit was accustomed to receive visitors—there lay and stood everything far more costly in character.

"Must I laugh or swear?" cried Master Jordan, "or must I believe in witchcraft?"

"Speak without reserve!" commanded Veit, turning to the silent attendant, who seemed privy to the whole mystery, "or I shall turn all this handsome lumber into the street again! Do not spoil the day for me!"

Instead of replying a word, the old journeyman handed him some keys and a small note, smiled a little triumphantly, and looked curiously around, as if

enjoying in advance already, the new surprise of all present.

Veit broke the seal, and read :—

Herr Jordan, you are entering to-day, I hear, on the married state. You have chosen a portionless orphan, whose treasures are thrift and virtue ; allow me to take her dowry upon myself, I will not thereby free myself from former obligations, but merely give a small token of my gratitude to a family, that has by example, deed, and counsel, been very useful to the country, and encourage you to proceed further in the course of your worthy father.

Truly yours,

GUSTAVE, F. V. A.

Veit read the last lines, with lips trembling with emotion. There was deep silence for a time. Christiane folded her hands together, and looked up to Heaven, as if entreating a blessing. Mother Martha wept tears of silent joy. Jonas walked away to the window, dried his eyes, and exclaimed, "I tell you, children, the Prince is indeed a true Prince ; I say a thorough, a true Prince."

But now the journeyman, overjoyed, related, in answer to a multitude of questions from the women, that a private secretary of the Prince had appeared, accompanied by attendants.

In the name of his Highness, he had commanded the clearing of all the rooms of the new married pair. Every one had been obliged to lay hand to the work. Then in one and the same quarter of an hour, from all corners had come cabinet-makers, upholsterers, carpetmen, china dealers, and shopkeepers, with their wares into the house. There had been complete confusion and disorder, yet the secretary had kept all under control. In less than three hours of the afternoon, everything had been set in its place, as it there stood : drawers and cupboards, glass and lamps, chairs and

tables, kitchen furniture, coffee-service of gold-edged china. It seemed the work of enchantment.

And now began an examination of the splendid things. There was nothing wanting ; much rather was there a superfluity, for the use of a small household. Even pin-cushions and needle-boxes, writing materials and a spinning-wheel, were found ; and with a secret smile, Mother Martha drew her young daughter-in-law to the sleeping room. There, beside one of the beds, stood a cradle of beautiful workmanship, with cushions and coverlets complete, all covered with the finest linen.

Here the story might end. We may add, however, that the well-informed bell and cannon-founder of Altenheim has indeed more than once been summoned to the castle of the Prince ; of him, who was in the beginning so much misunderstood, but afterwards many times blessed. And at the cost of the state, in the former Gideon buildings, a higher industrial school for the scientific and practical training of hand-workers, mechanics, and manufacturers has actually been established under the management of young Jordan. The Prince nominated him director of it. Clever teachers of mathematics, natural history, chemistry, and technology, as well as of drawing, and modelling, and book-keeping, were immediately appointed, and after a year's trial of their merits, retained at liberal salaries ; gratuitous instruction in the French and English languages was given at the Gymnasium ; Prince Gustave richly endowed the museum of natural history, the collection of models, and the technological library.

Master Jonas remained many years unwearied in his public spirited exertions. He succeeded in establish-

ing in the capital a hand-workers' union. In it were discussed and determined among the masters, better and more important things than had formerly been in the guilds ; as, for instance, what branches of industry are still wanting in the country ? How are they to be drawn hither ? What workmen is every master bound to exclude from his workshop as soon as they dishonour the trade—drinkers, gamblers, Saint Monday's men, political champions, &c. ?

His hand-workers' union had, in course of time, results far more important than the Prince had expected from it : such as an annual public industrial exhibition ; a quarterly show of wares among all the masters, when experienced men were selected to test the quality of the articles, and report to the committee of the union ; a sick fund for journeymen ; a widow and orphan fund for hand-workers, to the establishment of which Jonas contributed again liberally.

His son emulated his example. Through the favour shown him, and the confidence reposed in him by the penetrating Prince, he succeeded in carrying into execution many undertakings which in other countries have been confined to pious wishes. The training school for teachers was provided with ground for gardens, for tillage, for vineyards, and meadows, and an agricultural instructor was appointed, that the teachers might be enabled to make the adult youth of the villages acquainted with the most judicious improvements in the management of the soil. A very charitable foundation for females, wherein hitherto about twenty daughters of respectable families had received, at great expense, instruction in French and Italian, in music, dancing, embroidery, and other lady-like occupations, was broken up, and instead of it, in every commune of the whole country, a labour school for the female sex was established. In these, instead of twenty young

ladies, twenty thousand maidens were instructed and exercised in the sewing of garments of all kinds, in patching and netting, and other household work ; and at the same time accustomed to greater cleanliness, order, and morality.

The effects of all these and other public institutions did not indeed appear plainly in less than ten years' time ; more plainly and more brilliantly, however, after the lapse of twenty years, when a new and better people had proceeded from the different training establishments. The widely spread prosperity of Altenheim, where formerly the fourth or fifth part of the inhabitants belonged to the poorest class, is well known.

The towns are embellished more and more, in proportion to the increased industry and love of fine arts among the people. The villagers demand and obtain higher rent for every foot of their ground ; the former uncleanliness and barbarism in the food, clothing, and habitations of the country people have almost entirely disappeared. Only old men and women, grown rusty in the habits and the ignorance of many years, complain that the times are worse ; at the sight of a higher civilisation, they complain of "the luxury and the pride of the world now-a-days ;" as superstition dies out, they complain of "human incredulity, and the downfall of religion." "The day of judgment," say they, "is at hand."

But Master Jonas, when seventy years had silvered his hair, stood almost equal to a strong man of thirty, happy, indeed, by the side of the pious Martha, in a circle of his children and children's children, honoured by his fellow citizens, and honoured by his Prince. He often told the story of his boyhood, how he used to go about hawking with father Thaddeus the tinker ; and his face glowed with inward satisfaction when he compared the former period with the present changes,

in the developing of which he could never have imagined he was to have so considerable a share. Then he used to exclaim: "Have I not always said it? Clear understanding in the head, love to one's neighbour in the heart, frugality in the stomach, and industry in the fingers, then—

'HAND-WORK STANDS ON GOLDEN FEET.'

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